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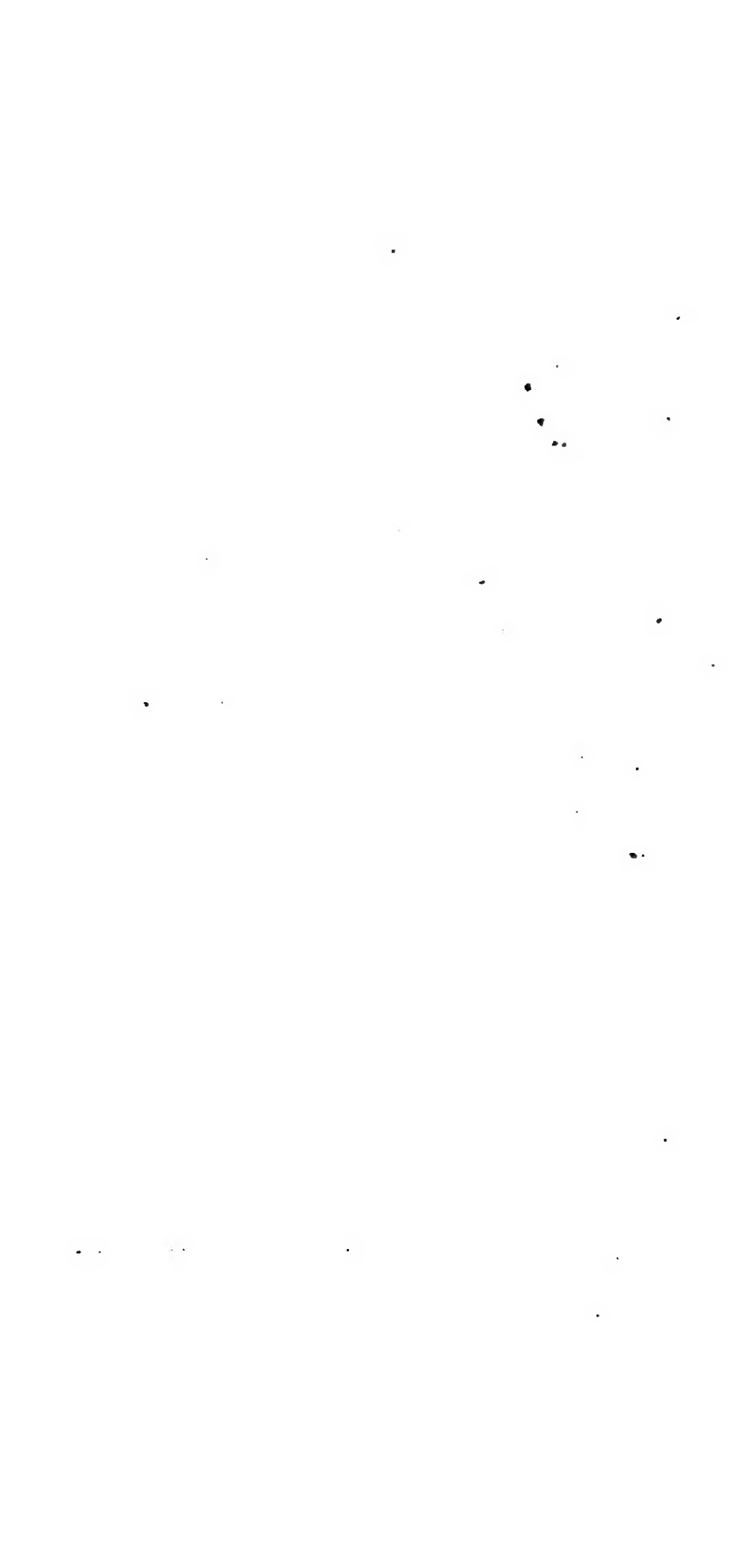




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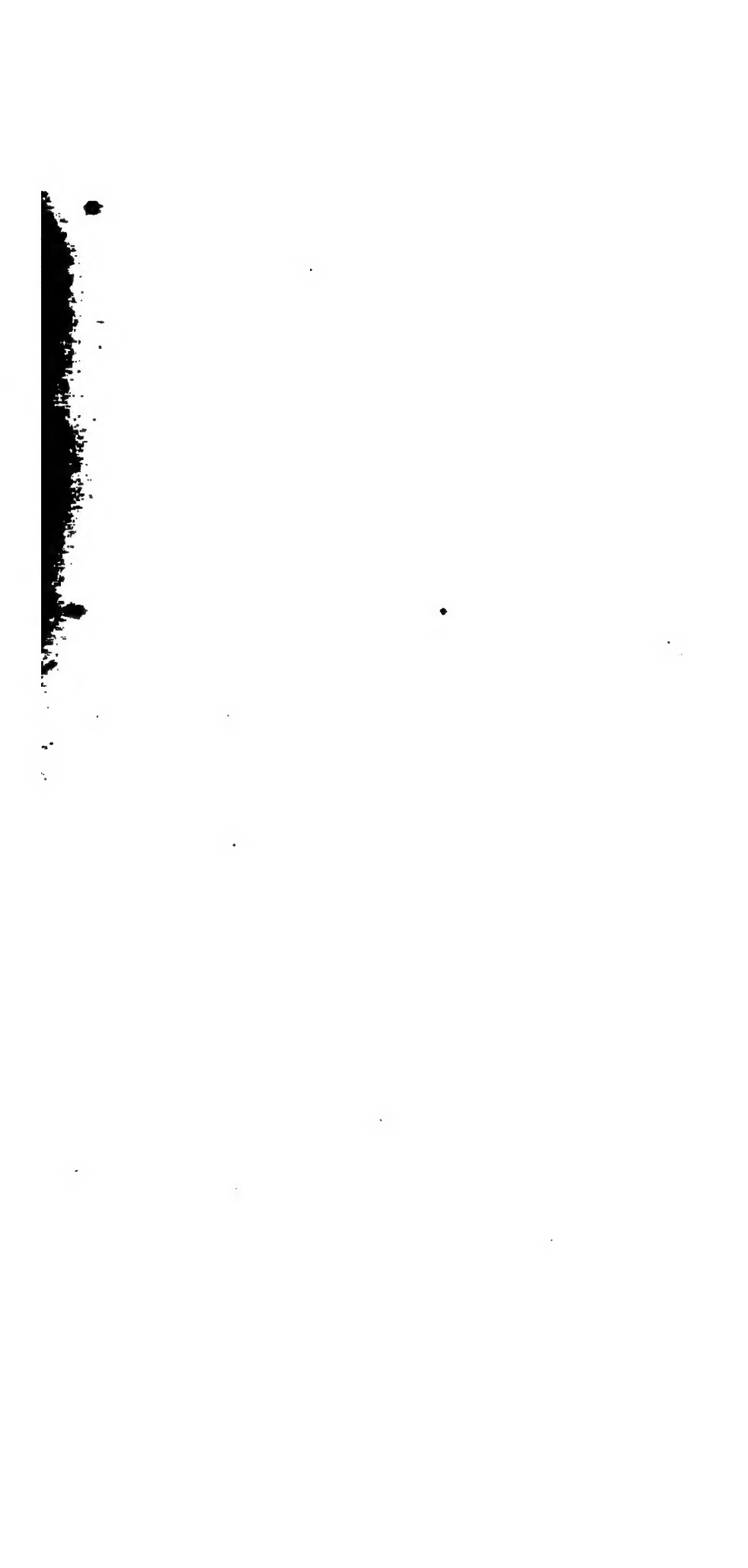




H. French, del.

J. R. Battershell, sc.

"WE SHALL THINK OF YOU OFTEN ENOUGH."

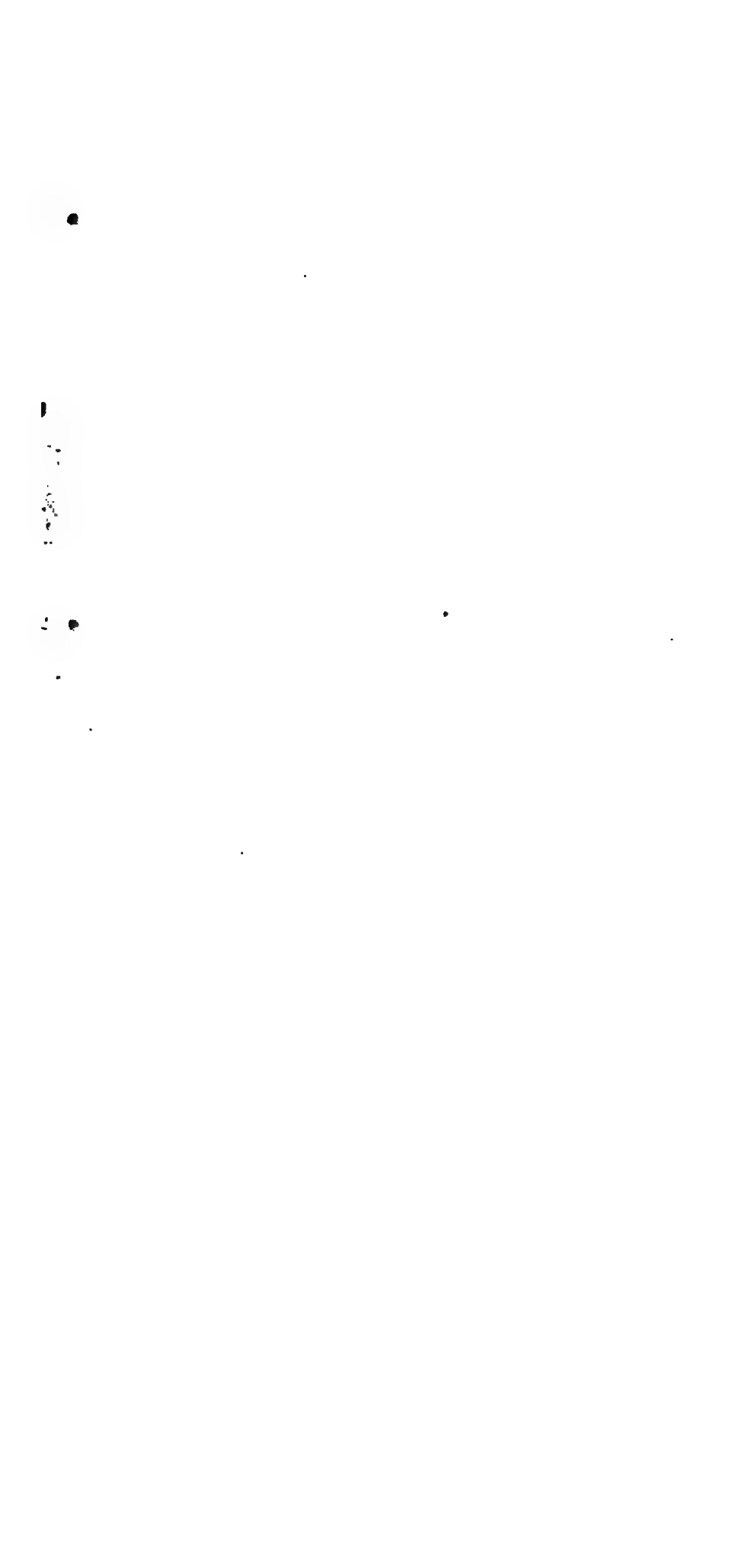




H. French, del.

"WE THINK OF YOU OFTEN ENOUGH."

J. B.





BELGRAVIA

A LONDON MAGAZINE

CONDUCTED BY

M. E. BRADDON

AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' 'AURORA FLOYD,' ETC. ETC.

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BELGRAVIA

MARCH 1875

HOSTAGES TO FORTUNE

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

CHAPTER XII.

'We can be nothing to each other, and yet are too much to each other. . . . I will see thee no more. All I can say is mere folly. In future I shall see thee as men see the stars.'

HERMAN is not false to that promise at the railway-station. He works as he has seldom worked before; labours for long hours with a spring and a freshness in his work that make it light. Bright thoughts come to him unsought; the gold lies on the surface. It is as if some gentle fairy sat beside him and breathed happy fancies into his mind. There is no toiling against the grain. His pen, swift as habit has made it, cannot keep pace with his fancy. And he knows that this new book—higher in design, simpler in treatment than any other story of his—will be popular, let the *Censor* pronounce what judgment it may. The characters which have such a vigorous life for him will live for his readers. In his last effort there might have been too much labour, a studied simplicity, a too elaborate puritanism. In this story Fancy follows her own wayward will, Imagination is dominant over Art.

Herman has not availed himself of Mr. Lyndhurst's invitation for the Derby, Editha being in town at the time of the Epsom saturnalia, and all the races that were ever run being of no more account to her lover than a race of flies across the ceiling.

Dropping into the greenroom of the Frivolity one evening to discuss certain vague ideas for a new comedy with Myra—he never goes to her house now—Herman finds Mr. Lyndhurst leaning in his favourite attitude against the mantelpiece, talking to Miss Walters, the *soubrette*, who in the matter of slang is more than a match for him.

'Rather unfriendly of you to throw me over the other day,'
THIRD SERIES, VOL. VI. F.S. VOL. XXVI. B

Westray,' says Mr. Lyndhurst, as they shake hands, while Miss Walters withdraws to the other end of the room, and contemplates her blue-satin hessians in the glass.

'It really wasn't an engagement, you know. I told you I was likely to be engaged elsewhere.'

'Did you? I thought you were booked for my party. We had rather a jolly day. Earlswood was with us, and so-and-so, and so-and-so,' running over a string of names; 'just the right people for that kind of thing; and we wound up with a dinner at the Pandemos. However, perhaps our party on Thursday will be more in your line; small and select—Mrs. Brandreth and Earlswood, Miss Belormond and myself. Just room for you. We're going to post down. Will you come?'

Herman Westray hesitates. Hamilton Lyndhurst is of all men the one whose acquaintance he cares least to cultivate just now—the man he would least like to see a frequent guest in that home which is now his daydream. But he and Lyndhurst have been on friendly terms for the last five years; he has cultivated the man's society at odd times, regarding him as an interesting specimen amid the varieties of mankind; and whatever his views for the future, he cannot well be uncivil to Mr. Lyndhurst in the present.

While he pauses undecided, Mrs. Brandreth comes in, flushed and breathless after a powerful piece of declamation at the end of an act. The withdrawal of *Hemlock* has been followed by an adaptation of a play by Dumas, which has startled all Paris at the Gymnase; but which, with its motive cut clean away and its morality whitewashed, has been adapted into an invertebrate domestic drama, and has signally failed in its attempt to startle London. This piece having been unlucky—though prepared by an eminent hand—Mrs. Brandreth is desperately anxious to get a play from Herman.

'I have been asking Westray to join our party on Thursday,' says Lyndhurst.

'And he has said yes, I hope,' exclaims Myra. 'How nice that will be! We can discuss your ideas for the new piece.'

'It will be against the interests of the new piece that I should take a day's holiday. I am working very closely just now.'

'All the more reason that you should allow yourself a few hours' respite,' says Myra.

Herman is doubtful. Those double tides have kept him very close to his desk, and he has a very human desire for fresh air and sunshine, the lights and shadows on a breezy heath, the concourse of prosperous well-dressed mankind, a race on which fortunes are won and lost. The racing year is getting old, and he has not seen one of the horses he hears men talk about at his club.

'If I could spare the day,' he says, wavering.

'If you can—why you will work all the better afterwards!'

'I fear not. There must be something mechanical in my workmanship; for throw me out of gear, and it takes ever so long before the wheels go again. I am like one of those monster iron-works one reads of in the North, where it takes a week to get the fires lighted.'

'Bank up your fires on Wednesday night, and you'll be ready for a vigorous start on Friday morning,' says Hamilton Lyndhurst. 'If you are a mechanical writer, you should go to work like your brother novelist Philpott, who writes eight folios every morning, nor more nor less, and leaves off at a hyphen rather than begin a ninth. That's the way to write novels.'

'Do go,' pleads Myra; and something in her tone brings back the old days when the lightest word from her would have been a command—that one happy summer time when her beauty and genius brightened the little world of home. She seems ten years younger to him just in this moment. Only for one moment. In the next the consciousness of all that has come and gone since those days dashes back upon him. Life is full of these brief waking trances—this catalepsy of memory.

'What can you want with me?' he asks. 'You cannot have a more amusing companion than Lyndhurst, and Lord Earlswood is to be with you.'

'I want to talk to you about a new piece. This *Hands, not Hearts*, is an abominable failure, although Paris is raving about it. I suppose it only proves the difference between Fargueil's power and mine.'

'I think it only proves that when you take away the motive of a play, and alter the relations of the principal characters towards each other, you weaken it considerably; to say nothing of the discount to be allowed for the change from the brightest and most epigrammatic of languages to our lumpish Saxon.'

'You'll come on Thursday?'

'Of course, if you make a point of it. I have rather a good idea which I should like to talk over with you. I know your tact in the arrangement of situation. You'll be sure to give me some valuable hints.'

His belief in her talent is unbounded. This unlucky adaptation has given new and striking proof of her power. She has borne the weight of the piece on her shoulders, and the scenes in which she appears have gone brilliantly, although the play has failed to draw money.

The Cup day opens brilliantly—Queen's weather, as all the newspapers exclaim in chorus, dimly reminiscent of the day when Majesty adorned the aristocratic Berkshire racecourse.

Herman feels that this brief pause in his busy life is worth having. Summer is so sweet a thing in this early stage, with all

her freshness upon her, before the fruit has begun to ripen on old garden-walls, before the scythe has slain the glory of long feathery grasses, or the song of nightingale has died in the twilit woodland.

Mr. Lyndhurst picks him up at his chambers at eleven o'clock, the last of the party. Mrs. Brandreth and Miss Belormond are in the capacious landau; Lord Earlswood and his confidential groom occupy the box; a basket swings behind; four horses and two blue-jacketed postillions astonish the bystanders.

Myra looks charming in a toilette which is of the simplest, yet has a picturesque grace that might do credit to Worth himself. The fabric of the dress is creamy-hued cambric, disposed in manifold plaitings; its only embellishment a broad sash of palest azure and a sprinkling of pale azure bows, like a flight of heaven-coloured butterflies. A soft cream-coloured felt hat—after Vandyke—with a long azure feather and massive silver buckle, completes Mrs. Brandreth's costume. Miss Belormond's brilliant silks and passementeries have cost three times as much; but Miss Belormond at best resembles an animated fashion-plate, while Myra looks as if she had just stepped out of an old picture.

Miss Belormond is a young lady who has devoted herself to the drama chiefly because she is handsome, and is expected to make her mark speedily as the beautiful Miss Belormond; secondly, because she and her immediate friends imagine that what Mrs. Brandreth has done may be as easily achieved by any young woman of equal personal attractions. And Miss Belormond is much handsomer than Mrs. Brandreth. Her eyes are larger, her complexion finer, her mouth more nearly resembles Cupid's bow, her figure is infinitely superior to Myra's, which has little to recommend it except consummate grace. In a word, then, Miss Belormond's friends come to the conclusion that the young lady has nothing to do but go in and win. Love of dramatic art—liking even—she has none; she has never recited six lines of Shakespeare voluntarily in her life, or been moved by a play. But she can be taught, argue her friends; it is all an affair of tuition; and as Miss Belormond has discovered all at once that she is dying to make her *début* as Juliet in white satin and silver passementerie, she is eager to learn. So she is handed over to one of the dramatic grinders, and is taught the same tones, and turns of head and arm, and inflections and tremulosos, that have been ground into Miss Wilson and Miss Milson, Miss Stokes and Miss Nokes, and in due course turned out of hand a finished Juliet. Her parents are not wealthy enough to defray the cost of this training, or to supply the costly raiment in which Miss Belormond thinks it indispensable to appear at rehearsal, nor are they influential enough to procure that *début* for which the young lady pines; but she is happily endowed with a rich godfather, who

seems to be a near relation of Cinderella's fairy sponsor, and this gentleman—gray-moustached and on the Stock Exchange—kindly arranges everything, even to the neat single brougham which is indispensable to Miss Belormond's launch—without which, indeed, that trim-built vessel could scarcely be got off the stocks.

Minnie Walters and the unbelieving of the Frivolity corps have wondered not a little that Mrs. Brandreth should engage so handsome a woman as 'Belormond' to act with her; but to see the two together is to find the answer to the enigma. That handsome dolt, splendid in colouring, perfect in feature, but with no more soul or spontaneous vitality than if she had been made by Madame Tussaud, is the best foil that the electrical Myra could have devised for herself. The expressionless beauty of this dull creature gives point and piquancy to Myra's countenance, which is all expression. The lifeless perfection of one enhances the charm of the other, and Myra is never so enchanting as when her imperfections are contrasted with this faultless nullity.

The two women have not a thought in common, Miss Belormond's mind seldom soaring above the contemplation of a new dress or the expectation of a little dinner. They rarely meet outside the theatre, and Miss Belormond's experiences at rehearsal have inspired a wholesome fear of her manageress. Myra's polished sarcasms sting her like the cut of a lash, and she has more than once hinted to the fairy godfather that she will never know real bliss until she has a theatre of her own, and actresses of her own to sneer at, as Mrs. Brandreth sneers at her—remarks which the fairy godfather allows to pass him by like the idle wind.

Miss Belormond therefore, aware that this companionship of to-day is a condescension on Mrs. Brandreth's part, is on her best behaviour, and is for the most part content to simper and say nothing. There is a drop of bitter mingled with her cup of sweetness, in the fact that she has accepted Mr. Lyndhurst's invitation without the consent or knowledge of that benevolent godfather; nay, that she has been guilty of overt deception in informing her estimable sponsor that she is going to spend the day with her aunt Drayson, at Nightingale-terrace, New-cross.

Mr. Lyndhurst is tired of the vapid beauty already, though he has not been a quarter of an hour in her society.

'I wish I'd asked Minnie Walters,' he says to himself; 'there's more fun in that cock-nosed little puss than in a regiment of Belormonds.'

Herman, who has seen Miss Belormond about the theatre, and noticed her about as much as he would have noticed any other handsome piece of furniture, greets her politely, but wonders not a little what she and Myra do in the same galley, outside the theatre. He does not know that this business of to-day is one of love's many

meanneesses. Myra, who now so seldom sees him, lowers herself to doubtful company for the sake of being for a few hours with him. Had he refused Mr. Lyndhurst's invitation, she would have found an excuse for staying at home on the Cup day.

He is here, and she is all life and brightness, ready to talk of anything or everything. There is a worldly flavour in her talk—a spice of lemon and cayenne—which is refreshing from its novelty. With Editha he has been always in the skies, her world not being his world, nor her thoughts his thoughts. Even in talking of literature Myra has the advantage over the well-read country maiden; for Myra reads only the books of the day—books whose titles are on all men's lips—and always contrives to read them while they are fresh. The last argumentative battering-ram brought to bear upon the citadel of Christian faith, the last French novel with its apotheosis of feminine infidelity, are alike familiar to her. She can talk of the gravest themes or the lightest, and has something trenchant or sparkling to say of all.

Herman feels like a man who, after riding some quiet cob for a while, returns to the lively thoroughbred he rode before, and, as the pace increases, experiences a new sense of rapture and feels a forgotten power come back to him. This worldly talk is passing pleasant—pleasanter, perhaps, for the rattling pace of the carriage as it skims along the broad high-road, with its endless fringe of prim suburban villas, with young limes and slim pink hawthorns and mop-shaped young trees of tenderest green, all after the same pattern; pleasanter, perhaps, because of the bright and varying face opposite him, smiling under the soft shadow of the Vandyke hat. Lyndhurst, tired of listening, tries to develop the conversational powers of Miss Belormond, who says, 'That they *do*,' and 'That he *does*,' when she is emphatically affirmative, and 'Not a bit of it' when negative. Earlswood sits on the box and converses with his groom, who has come to look after the postillions and make himself generally useful. His lordship is serious and meditative, as beseems a man whose losses or gains between this and sundown must be considerable.

'I hope I've done right in putting the pot on about Golden Fleece,' he says dubiously.

'Couldn't do better, my lord, after the information we had from—hum—hum—' replies the groom, dropping his voice to a confidential mumble.

They arrive on the heath just when the crowd is thickest, and before ascending to Mr. Lyndhurst's box stroll up and down the lawn for a little, Herman and Mrs. Brandreth interchanging greetings with a good many people, Miss Belormond stared at freely, but not finding many of her acquaintance in these favoured regions.

Somehow—Herman can hardly tell how it has come about—

Myra and he are more intimate to-day than they have ever been since their period of juvenile folly at Colehaven. He has given her his arm to steer her through the crowd, and the tapering hand, in a glove which in texture and colour resembles the petal of a tea-rose, rests confidently upon his sleeve, so confidently that he is fain to press it gently once or twice when the crowd is densest. Her talk is full of life and freshness—freshness as of Cliquot just uncorked rather than of new milk. She criticises the people they pass, utters scathing cynicisms—borrowed from the *Scourge* or the *Censor*—with a delicious placidity, and contrives to interest her companion so completely that he is in no hurry to ascend to the box, whence Miss Belormond and Hamilton Lyndhurst are already raking the crowd with huge race-glasses. Earlswood is there too, and his smaller glass follows that pair below, with two angry eyes behind it.

Does Herman forget Editha on this sunlit Cup day, amidst odours of Ess bouquet, and rustle of silk, and flutter of laces and muslins, and raucous cries of 'Ten to one on the field'? Well, no; his state of mind is hardly forgetfulness, but rather a calm severance from Editha and that portion of his life which belongs to her. He is a young man capable of leading two distinct lives—half-a-dozen distinct lives if they offered themselves to him with sufficient attractiveness—of playing Odysseus abroad or Odysseus at home as occasion served. If fate throw him into Calypso's or Nausicaa's company he will enjoy himself reasonably, but be not the less faithful to Penelope when he returns to the halls of Ithaca. He sees no harm in making himself pleasant to Myra to-day, especially after his categorical declaration of limited liability in the way of friendship. Of his engagement and approaching marriage he has said not a word; these are subjects too sacred to be talked about on racecourses or in greenrooms. The topics he discusses to-day are light as thistledown, and, like thistledown, float away and are forgotten. Yet perchance even this careless talk of to-day carries the germ of fertility with it, like that feathery seed, and will crop up somehow in days to come.

They go up to the box at last, where Miss Belormond, having stared at the women's dresses to satiety, is yawning behind her race-glass, and wondering whether the fairy godfather has quite accepted that fiction about aunt Drayson, and wishing that some one would propose an adjournment to lobster salad and moselle, or chicken sandwich and champagne.

This desired diversion comes almost immediately from Hamilton Lyndhurst, who is eager to escort the ladies to the refreshment-room, or to Mr. Vyne Hendler's private tent, where the initiated are being hospitably entertained all day long, and where royalty is supposed mostly to congregate.

Miss Belormond rises briskly at the first bidding, having re-

tained her primitive simplicity in the matter of appetite. Mrs. Brandreth refuses to stir.

‘Do you suppose I am going to allow myself to be trampled upon by a famishing crowd for the sake of a sandwich?’ she asks. ‘If you like to send me some claret-cup and a biscuit, I will take it here. Mr. Westray is going to tell me about his comedy.’

Miss Belormond departs on Hamilton’s arm, with an awful feeling that the fairy godfather must hear of this somehow, and that her brougham and her silk dresses will be spirited away like Cinderella’s at the stroke of twelve; but the present delights of being jostled in a well-dressed crowd, having sweet nothings murmured into her ear in Mr. Lyndhurst’s legato baritone, and consuming mayonnaise and champagne—wholesome mixture!—outweigh that vague dread, and the fair Belormond, not having room in her brain for composite emotion, is happy. Lord Earlswood has gone down to talk to the bookmen, so Herman and Myra have the box to themselves. She sits with one arm resting listlessly upon the velvet cushion, her profile towards the crowd, and with about as much thought of the purpose of the meeting as if she had been at church. He sits with his back to the crowd and his chair tilted on its hind legs, thoughtful even to absent-mindedness.

‘Do you remember the races at Tipsbury, the day papa drove us over in Mr. Sanderson’s dogcart?’ asks Myra. ‘What a delicious autumn day it was, and what lovely country—a stretch of common on the crest of a hill—and woods, woods, woods on every side, and the great blue sea shining at us through a break in the hills! And what a simple-minded rustic meeting, half a race and half a fair! Do you remember, Herman?’

‘No,’ he answers, curt to incivility; ‘I remember nothing. I drowned my memory ever so many years ago in the waters of Lethe. I know that there is a hamlet called Tipsbury on the ordnance-map, but I know no more.’

‘What a nice thing that Lethe must be!’ retorts Myra, coiling up, as the Americans say. ‘I wish they would import the water, like Apollinaris. Many people I know seem to wash out their memories with soda-and-brandly. I fancy that is the modern Lethe. Now let us be business-like, and talk of our comedy.’

It is something to be able to say ‘our,’ even of this child of his brain; something that she can give form and life to the creations of his fancy; something to help him by a suggestion, to direct him by her taste, which is faultless in all the details of dramatic art, from the turn of an epigram to the length of a ballet-dancer’s petticoat. They talk drama for the next half hour vigorously, and Myra helps her author by more than one subtle suggestion, shows him where his scaffolding is weak, and how the climax of an act may be intensified. In his gratitude he admires her almost as

much as that innocent Myra of years gone by who acted the sleeping scene in *Macbeth* in the children's parlour at Colehaven Vicarage.

The race for the Cup comes on at last, after a good many races, which seem slightly uninteresting to the masses, though the cause of maddest bawling and convulsive throes, as of Dionysian possession, to the bookmen. Now every one is, or pretends to be, interested; every glass follows the favourite in the preliminary canter, which sometimes seems rather better than the race itself. Miss Belormond has backed the favourite, and is to win gloves. Mrs. Brandreth has haughtily refused to speculate in any manner.

Very far away from that crowded racecourse are Myra's thoughts, even while the horses are sweeping past, as if driven before the blast of a hurricane, and the voices below are clamouring loudest. She is thinking of Colehaven and the days that are gone—the careless days, brimful of happiness, when Herman was hers. Perhaps it is that sweet time of youth she regrets almost as much as her lost lover; perhaps she exaggerates that vanished happiness, and takes it for something better than it was, being so utterly gone. However this may be, regret is bitter. She sits beside her sometime lover, and knows herself as far from him as if they had the Southern Sea between them. And yet to-day her mind is fluttered with faint hopes. He has seemed happy, amused, interested. Her power to charm him may not be quite extinct even yet.

They leave the course immediately after the great race, Myra and Miss Belormond being due on the stage at half-past eight; and a twenty-eight mile drive being no trifle, even with change of horses at Hounslow. Throughout that homeward drive Mrs. Brandreth is bright and fresh as when they journeyed by the same road in the morning. She has put the past and future out of her mind, and thinks only of being agreeable in the present. She has an instinctive consciousness that sentiment will avail her nothing with Herman. His assailable side is worldly: æsthetic, artistic perhaps, but assuredly not romantic. She lays about her at her will with that piquant reckless wit of hers—a mere effervescence of the moment and hardly worth remembrance, but sharp enough to be refreshing to jaded spirits. Lord Earlswood, who has exchanged places with Lyndhurst for the return, is in raptures.

'I can't think where you get your ideas,' he exclaims; 'they are so far-fetched, yet they seem to come to you so naturally.'

'They grow wild, like other weeds,' replies Myra. 'I keep no intellectual forcing pit.'

'Most people's clever hits are grown under glass,' says Earlswood, quick to take up anybody else's notion. 'Their sharpness is like the acidity of untimely peaches.'

Miss Belormond thinks her companions might as well talk French at once—it would hardly be ruder to employ that unknown

tongue than to discourse in a jargon like this, which, for all she knows, may veil some sarcastic allusions to herself. This young lady, who has graduated at a Peckham day-school, is apt to be afflicted with an uneasy suspicion of educated people. She, indeed, half believes that education is only another name for refined malice.

It is only seven o'clock when they drive past the Wellington statue.

'Come to my rooms and have tea,' says Herman, who has a feeling that this holiday of his cannot last too long.

'Oh, how nice that would be!' exclaims Miss Belormond, who has brightened a little under the influence of a few civil speeches from Lord Earlswood. 'I never feel fit for anything if I go without my cup of tea.'

'You shall have your cup of tea, Miss Belormond. You'll stop, won't you, Myra? You can spare half an hour.'

Rarely of late has he called her Myra. The shining hazel eyes look at him dreamily for a moment or so before she answers.

'Half an hour, and ten minutes more to drive to the theatre; that will leave us nearly an hour to dress. Yes, I think we could manage it; couldn't we, Belormond?'

Belormond is sure it can be managed. She has a wonderful idea of Mr. Westray—a vague notion that an author is a compendium of everybody else's cleverness, and that this particular author is always inwardly laughing at her. She is unspeakably grateful for any civility from him, and is curious to know what kind of place an author lives in. She had supposed the abode of the species to be mostly in garrets, when not in the Queen's Bench, and has been not a little surprised at discovering that Herman inhabits Piccadilly.

Myra, too, has a gentle curiosity about Herman's lodgings. How well she remembers his room at the Vicarage!—room which she has coily peeped into over his sister's shoulder when the proprietor of the chamber was out of the way. Such a narrow den! a mere slip off another room, meant for a dressing closet, but used as a study, with a shelf or two of shabby books—the father's college books handed down to the son—a battered old desk by the open window, a bunch of honeysuckle and roses in a brown jar on the window-sill, pipes, gun, fishing-rod, foils, and single-sticks in a conglomerated heap in the corner, and a collection of Tenniel's cartoons wafered against the faded paper.

The landau pulls up before the door of a tall house facing the Green Park, and Herman hands the ladies to the pavement. His latch-key opens the door, and they go up a great many stairs.

'He does live in a garret, after all,' thinks Belormond, pleased with her own sagacity.

He stops on the second-floor landing, however, and opens the door of a large airy room, with a bay window and a wide substantial

balcony—such a balcony to smoke and muse in upon warm summer nights, with a glimpse of the finials of minster and senate-house yonder across the tree-tops.

It is a large room, simply furnished; not lined with books from floor to ceiling, for Westray is too much a man of the world to be a book collector. There is a bookcase on either side of the fireplace—one containing books of reference only, the other just those choicest of the world's classics, to know which is to have skimmed the very cream of the human intellect.

The desk or writing-table occupies the centre of the room, and that is large enough for a solicitor in full practice. A capacious sofa; half-a-dozen delightful arm-chairs, various in shape, age, and material; a sutherland table, and a handy-looking sideboard and cellaret, complete the furniture of this apartment, which is study and living-room in one. Some fine photographs (French and German) adorn the walls.

'Quite a bachelor's tent,' says Myra. 'Looks as if it could be lifted easily.'

Herman orders tea instantly.

'I daresay the kettle's off the boil,' says Miss Belormond. 'It's so difficult to get boiling water in lodgings; at least I find it so, though I pay three guineas a week and extras. They're quite put out if I want a cup of tea promiscuously.'

'You should get them into better training, Miss Belormond,' retorts Herman. 'I am always demanding promiscuous cups of tea, and the slavey is as brisk as Aladdin's genius.'

The slavey, a sedate-looking housemaid of thirty odd, justifies his praise by appearing promptly with tea-tray and urn, and all appliances to boot—London cream, strawberries, pound-cake, wafer biscuits from the adjacent confectioner's. The Sutherland table is drawn into the bay, and they sit down to tea, Myra in the post of honour. Herman remembers that afternoon tea at Lochwithian with a rather guilty feeling; yet there can be very little harm, if any, in showing this small civility to an old friend.

The half hour goes very quickly, and then Herman puts the ladies back into the carriage, shakes hands with both, and strolls off with Lyndhurst to dine at the Agora.

'Wonderfully fascinating woman, Mrs. Brandreth,' says Lyndhurst. 'You're a lucky fellow, Westray.'

'Lucky because Mrs. Brandreth is fascinating? That's a *non sequitur*.'

'But you don't mean to say that—that there isn't some understanding—that you are not going to marry her?' blurts out Lyndhurst, with his charming candour. 'Somebody told me quite a romantic story: that you were engaged years ago, before she married Brandreth, and that when you met afterwards, you both discovered

that you had never ceased to care for each other, and so on—the sort of thing they put into novels.’

‘It is the misfortune of such a position as Mrs. Brandreth’s that the world is inventive, and that when a lady’s life happens to be particularly uneventful, people’s imaginations supply the void with plausible fiction. Mrs. Brandreth to me is simply Mrs. Brandreth; a very charming woman, whose talents I admire, whose force of character I respect.’

‘But you’re not engaged to her? Well, that’s curious; I thought it was an established fact. Certainly Earlswood has contrived to get her a good deal talked about; but we, who are in a manner behind the scenes, know there’s nothing in *that*.’

‘I consider Mrs. Brandreth a woman of perfectly undamaged reputation,’ replies Herman, ‘if that’s what you mean. It merely happens that she and I are friends, and not lovers. If I had any warmer feeling for her than friendship, there is nothing in her past or her present life that would urge me to stifle it.’

‘That’s very generously expressed,’ says Lyndhurst. ‘You fellows who write books have such a knack of turning a sentence. O, by the way, who was that very charming young lady I met you with at the Frivolity a month or two ago—a tall girl, dignified, indeed rather haughty-looking, but with a sort of rustic freshness about her?’

‘That young lady is Miss Morcombe, the daughter of a Welsh gentleman.’

‘Welsh! dear me; I thought they wore conical hats and short petticoats.’

‘I believe some of the peasantry do indulge in those eccentricities, but not in the neighbourhood of Mr. Morcombe’s estate.’

‘So,’ thought Lyndhurst, ‘Mr. Morcombe is a landed gentleman, and that lovely girl has money. Artful card this Westray.’

They dine together generously, and Herman, going back to his chambers late at night, feels that he has wasted his day, or, in his own stronger language, ‘given a day to Belial.’

CHAPTER XIII.

‘She is mine own;
And I as rich in having such a Jewel,
As twenty seas, if all their sand were pearl,
The water nectar, and the rocks pure gold.’

HERMAN goes house-hunting soon after that Ascot Cup day, goes in search of the nest that is to shelter his tender dove by and by. He explores Chiswick—dear little humble unpretentious Chiswick, which is old still while all the rest of the world is new—but Chiswick being limited in its capacities, and having its nicest nooks and

corners filled, does not offer him just that dainty little water-side villa he desires to find; so he harks back to Fulham, and there, not far from Putney bridge, discovers a modest dwelling, with a small garden and lawn sloping to the Thames; a house once occupied by a famous wit, and which seems to him the better for the association, though the wit's life was but a marred and broken existence at best.

The house is not especially convenient or well built, but the drawing-room, and two rooms over, which will do for bedroom and boudoir, Herman thinks are pretty. There are windows opening on the lawn, a verandah, a balcony above—all those adjuncts which a man looks for, when he ought to be taking stock of the kitchen range and inquiring if there is a copper. Herman is pleased, and, lest the chance should slip through his fingers, takes the house on a repairing lease without delay, his tenancy to begin from the mid-summer quarter.

This important step taken, he engages an ancient female of the charwoman species to take charge of the house, and goes forthwith to Messrs. Molding and Korness, an expensive and fashionable firm of decorators and upholsterers, and gives them carte-blanche to make his house perfect after its kind.

'I don't want expensive decoration or furniture,' he says, thinking himself passing prudent the while. 'Let everything be of the simplest, but in exquisite taste. As taste is your business I shall not interfere unnecessarily. Let the prevailing tone of the drawing-room be white and pale seagreen,' he adds, remembering Ruth's room at Lochwithian.

The upholsterer's man bows and smiles, and ventures to hope he shall give satisfaction.

'Perhaps you would like to look round, sir, with a view to making your own selection,' says the man; 'all our goods are marked in plain figures:' as if that made them cheaper.

Herman acquiesces, and perambulates an abattis of chairs, and then a forest of Arabian beds, and then a city of dining-tables, and a necropolis of wardrobes, all like family tombs.

'Dear me, how uninteresting furniture looks when it comes to be classified!' he exclaims. 'I don't feel capable of choosing anything. I think I'll send you a rough drawing of the style of room I like, and you can carry it out in your own way.'

The upholsterer is charmed with the suggestion. He sees his way to something rather expensive in the way of joinery.

To a lady's cabriole lounging chair, in ebonised wood, made after your own design £16 16 0

To a gentleman's Etruscan do. do., cabriole legs, also made to own design 17 17 0

This is the kind of entry which presents itself to the upholsterer's

mental vision as he bows his customer out. Herman thinks of his loose thousands, and resolves that his darling's nest shall be as bright as taste and money can make it. She shall not be made to feel that she has wasted herself on a pauper, that she has lost too much in losing Vivian Hetheridge's wealth and status.

He writes to tell her that 'our house' is taken, and that he will come to Lochwithian next week if he may. He turns his back upon London one fair July morning, gladly as a boy let loose from school. He has sent Myra Brandreth the first two acts of a comedy, but has not seen her since the Cup day, and he reserves the final act as the conclusion of his novel as work to be done in the tranquil atmosphere of Lochwithian. He will have his working hours there, he thinks; an hour or two between breakfast and luncheon some times, an hour stolen from the night.

How sweet the hills and valleys seem to him, when Shrewsbury is left behind, and the placid fertility of Midland landscape gives place to romantic Wales—wooded hills, winding streams, dry some of them in this peerless summer time, one but a bare bed of bleached pebbles gleaming whitely athwart brushwood and saplings! He remembers the last time he travelled by this single line, piercing its iron way through the cloven heart of the hills, and always ascending at a very palpable inclination, till the air blows fresher and keener, and he seems to enter a purer world. He was going back to London smoke and London worldliness on that occasion, going downwards, and Editha Morcombe was no more to him than a lovely and noble-minded woman, utterly remote from his life.

Just in the sultriest hour of the sultry day the train, reduced to half-a-dozen carriages of Tenbyites, slackens its pace, and comes slowly past the sprinkling of labouring men's cottages and small little modern villas which forms the outskirts of Llandrysak. There is the little station—refreshment-room, bookstall, all *en règle*; the two brisk porters, ready to carry your luggage to the loftiest eerd among the surrounding hills; the placid station-master, who looks as if he had never heard of a railway accident; and last, not least, the entire population of Llandrysak turned out to witness the arrival of the train. There they sit in an awe-inspiring row, as many at least as the benches will accommodate, the rest standing, and all glaring at the new-comers.

Herman regards these aborigines no more than if they had been so many rows of cabbages in the station-master's garden, for yonder above the boundary of the station he sees a sociable and pair with a clerical gentleman sitting in front with the coachman, and a lady seated behind; a lady who smiles at him from under the shade of an Indian silk umbrella, a lady to whom his heart goes forth with glad bound.

The clerical gentleman, scrambling down as the train stops

reveals the features of Mr. Petherick, the incumbent of Lochwithian, and is on the platform by the time Herman has alighted, ready to help in looking after the luggage. A large portmanteau, dressing-bag, and despatch-box are speedily selected from the varieties of property disgorged by the van and hoisted into the front of the sociable, filling the space lately occupied by Mr. Petherick. Herman leaves that amiable parson the entire responsibility of the luggage while he hurries to Editha and clasps the dear hand, almost too deeply moved for speech. Forgotten in that moment every thought or hope that is not of her or for her. How lovely the scene appears to him—the circle of hills, the warmth and glow of the summer afternoon, the distant farmhouses here and there, white against the green, the utter peacefulness of all things round him! The quiet of the landscape steals into his breast like balm, and as he takes his place beside Editha he has that reposeful sense of joy which comes to us sometimes in a happy dream—some vision in which the dead come back to us and the days of our youth are renewed.

‘Perhaps it would be better to put the portmanteau behind, Editha, if you don’t mind it,’ says the brisk voice of Mr. Petherick, who feels that he may be rather in the way should he intrude his earthly presence upon these two dreamers. Editha looks up at him with a gentle smile of unconsciousness, not in the least aware what he means, just at this particular moment having lost the understanding of her native language save when spoken by Herman. So Mr. Petherick shunts the portmanteau from the box to the body of the sociable, and resumes his seat by the coachman, leaving Herman and Editha alone in their paradise.

‘How good of you to meet me!’ exclaims Herman.

‘How good of you to come ever so much earlier than you promised!’ responds Editha; after which original remarks they lapse into fatuous silence for some moments, contemplating each other’s faces as the sociable rolls past the outskirts of Llandrysak to the lonely road which crosses a wide expanse of heathy common where tiny pools of water shine like jewels in the sun. The lark sings high above them, carolling as for very gladness at their reunion.

‘How pleased nature seems to see us together again!’ says Herman, with a happy laugh. ‘There seems a note wanting in the harmony of the universe when we two are parted.’

‘Do you really mean that you have been so foolish as to take a house, Herman, or was that part of your letter a joke?’

‘A joke for which I am to pay a hundred and ten pounds a year, love, to say nothing of taxes—a joke which Molding and Korness of Oxford-street are going to furnish. It will be ready by our wedding-day in September, so if we get tired of Switzerland

sooner than we suppose we shall, our home will be swept and garnished for our reception.'

'Our home! how strange that sounds, Herman!'

'Sweeter than strange, dear.'

'But you talk of our wedding as if it were settled for September.'

'Isn't it? I thought we came to that understanding.'

'No, indeed; I was to have at least a year at home with Ruth—time enough for her to accustom herself to the idea of our separation.'

'There is to be no such thing as separation. You and I will often run down to Lochwithian for a week or two, if your father will allow us.'

'As if papa would not be glad to have us!'

'And your sister can come to us at least twice a year. Traveling is made easy nowadays, even for an invalid.'

'Ruth has been so good!' exclaims Editha.

In this first half hour of reunion they are both inclined to be discursive, not finishing up one subject thoroughly, but starting off at a tangent every now and then.

'How good, dearest?'

'Why, dear, just at first the thought of our engagement made her rather unhappy. She is so much attached to Mr. Hetheridge, and you, of course, are a comparative stranger. She asked me so many questions about you, Herman—your principles, your ideas upon serious subjects—questions I hardly knew how to answer. We seem so seldom to have talked seriously.'

'My love, we are not a convocation of Churchmen, or a Quakers' meeting, or an assembly of Scottish Presbyterians. What would you have us talk about but ourselves and our own happiness?'

'But I told her how good you are, Herman—how full of noble ambition and refined feelings; and then that last book of yours—that quite won her heart. So, little by little, she grew reconciled to the idea of our marriage.'

'What ineffable goodness!' cries Herman, somewhat piqued. It is not pleasant to be received with stinted welcome, even into the best of families.

'O Herman, how unkindly you say that! You must not speak of Ruth with a sneer if you love me.'

'If I love you, little one!' he echoes tenderly, drawing her nearer to him (that good parson Petherick is placidly contemplative of the landscape). 'If I love you! There are no ifs in such love as mine. But it's hardly a pleasant thing to learn that one is to be received as the serpent that crept into Eden. Is it Hetheridge's old family or large estate which has won your sister's heart?'

'Neither, dear. She likes him because he is so good and true.'

'And she harbours a lurking notion that I must needs be bad and false—an incarnation of city vices as opposed to rustic virtues. I think you would have grown weary of Mr. Hetheridge's provincial perfection, love, in the lasting tête-à-tête of matrimony.'

'Let us talk about the house, Herman. How pretty it must be!'

Hereupon follows a vivid description of the Fulham villa: the river—the clumsy old wooden bridge—Putney church, grave and gray—the episcopal palace with its shady garden—the secluded quiet of the place.

'I have had such a happy idea about the dining-room,' says Herman. 'You remember the scene in *Hemlock*, the Pompeian triclinium?'

'Perfectly.'

'Well, I have told Molding and Korness to make our hall and dining-room Pompeian. The success of *Hemlock* will very well balance any extravagance in the suggestion.'

'What a charming idea!' exclaims Editha; 'but isn't it wrong to spend so much money upon furnishing, Herman? We are not going to be rich.'

'My love, do you remember what Dr. Johnson said about Thrule's brewery, when the business was being sold? "We are not here to sell a parcel of boilers and vats, but the potentiality of growing rich beyond the dreams of avarice." Do you hold literature as something less than beer, and are you going to limit my power of increasing our income? You do not know what strength I shall have to labour, dear, when I have given hostages to Fortune.'

'Dear Herman, how brave you are!' she cries admiringly, as if he stood on the topmost rung of a scaling-ladder in a storm of shot and shell; 'but the plainest, humblest home you could make for me would be just as dear as the finest house your successful work can win. I want to be your helpmate, not a burden to you.'

They are driving up to the porch at Lochwithian by this time. The old dogs lie basking in the sunshine; the old-fashioned flower-beds are full of bloom. The fishpond and the fountain, the crumbling old red walls where the peaches and apricots are ripening, smile at him as in welcome. Every familiar feature of the place is the same as when he saw it first just a year ago; the only difference is that the Editha of last year was a stately stranger about whom he thought with vague wonder, while the Editha of to-day is his very own—his wife that is to be.

'Darling,' he whispers with a little gush of emotion, 'I am so happy when I think of last year and this.'

'Come to see Ruth,' says Editha directly they have alighted. She leads him straightway up the shallow old oaken staircase, past the newel over which he remembers her looking down at him when

they parted, along the shadowy corridor where stand old blue-delft jars crammed with rose-leaves, and into the white panelled parlour where the invalid sister reclines, just as he saw her first, in spotless cambric morning robe, with a knot of coloured ribbon here and there among the soft white drapery.

'He has come, Ruth,' cries Editha, as if this arrival, formally announced by letter two days ago, were something wonderful.

'I am very glad,' replies Ruth softly, in that gentle voice of hers which has a touch of pathos at times. 'How do you do, Herman? Welcome to Lochwithian, brother. We are brother and sister henceforward, are we not? bound to each other by our common love for Editha.'

'I hope to be not all unworthy to claim a brother's name,' says Herman, kissing the hand that has been laid trustingly in his. He feels that, in his character of serpent, he has been received with no small indulgence. 'I fear you must hate me for coming here to steal your darling,' he says humbly.

Ruth's grave eyes seem to be looking him through and through, perusing all the flaws and specks and knots in the grain of his nature.

'I am not quite selfish enough for that,' she answers sadly, 'though it has been one of my prayers that Editha's home and mine should never lie far apart. But my chief thought and desire must always be for her happiness. If it is happier for her that we should live apart, so be it. I am content.'

Editha and Ruth have clasped hands, the younger girl kneeling by her sister's couch.

'We are never to be long apart, dearest,' says Editha. 'I am coming home to see you and papa at least three times a year, and you are coming to us twice in the year; that will leave short intervals of separation.'

'Our home will be yours, Ruth,' says Herman. 'It shall not be our fault if it is not made pleasant to you.'

'I will come to you sometimes, if God gives me strength,' answers Ruth, her eyes clouded with tears, but a smile on the sensitive mouth. 'It will be sweet to me to see my pet in her new home—to see her happy and beloved.'

After this all doleful thoughts are dismissed. They talk of the house at Fulham—the Pompeian hall and dining-room; the drawing-room, which is to be furnished like a room in a Dutch picture, after a drawing of Herman's; garden small, but sheltered by a few good old trees, and altogether perfect in its way.

'A garden where we can take our coffee on summer evenings, Editha,' adds Herman, 'and where I can lie at your feet thinking out my work, while you watch the boats gliding past, silent as shadows, on the starlit river.'

How sweet it all sounds, and to Ruth's ear how vague ! Editha gazes up at her lover with ineffable rapture—her poet lover ; for to her mind he is no less than a poet—a creature apart, gifted with an unsurpassable birthright. She believes that every feeling of his, every fancy, every desire is of a finer texture than the feelings, fancies, and desires of ordinary mankind. The bitter truth that in common things your poet is apt to be no better than common men has yet to be revealed to her.

Ruth thinks of honest, earnest, single-minded Vivian, and wonders whether a man who lives by the cultivation of his fancy, and must in some measure be the slave of his fancy, will ever make as good a husband as that simple-hearted Radnorshire squire. Will the time ever come when either of these two—all in all to each other to-day, and seeing nothing in life beyond—will find a something wanting in their union, a sense of something missed, something that might have been, and is not ? That 'might have been' is the curse of your poetic temperament. The lovers leave Ruth and wander out into the garden by and by, and through the great stable-yard, and across an ancient orchard to the ruins, and Herman renews his acquaintance with scenes and objects in which he has henceforward a personal interest. They stroll together by the narrow river, where the forget-me-nots are blooming just as they bloomed last year ; and they look up at the solemn hills which have outlasted Lochwithian Priory, and taste that utter and perfect happiness which only such lovers know—lovers whose future lies before them smooth as some placid lake shining under the summer sun.

The Squire receives his future son-in-law heartily, not because he is reconciled to the match—which he is not—but because he is too hospitable a man to be otherwise than cordial to his guest. One of the prettiest rooms in the Priory has been allotted to Herman—a room at one end of the rambling old house, with an oriel window overlooking the shrubbery and the church in the hollow beneath.

'I shall hear the bell ringing for early service of a morning, and be reminded that there are God-fearing men and women in this out-of-the-way corner of the land. I wish I could follow their footsteps, and feel that I was doing good for my soul,' Herman says to himself with a sigh, as he looks out of his window before dressing for dinner.

Time glides by with a divine quiet at Lochwithian. There is a dinner at the Priory soon after his arrival, and Herman is presented to the county families resident within visiting distance. Other dinners follow to which Herman is bidden, and he feels that he is received and accepted as Editha's future husband ; but the dinner parties hardly make any break in these halcyon days of his life. They are very quiet gatherings, and he is generally

allowed to have Editha all to himself for the greater part of the time, so that the dinner parties in a manner resolve themselves into delicious assemblies of two. Editha and he are seated apart at an open window; or they stroll out into the moonlit garden to look at the roses; or they linger in a conservatory because the rooms are warm. Everybody is indulgent to them, and they are petted and humoured as if they were children.

'Rather humiliating, isn't it, darling, that our helpless condition should be so obvious to every one?' says Herman; whereupon Editha laughs and blushes, and rearranges the spray of maiden-hair which she pinned in his coat in the hall at Lochwithian. She feels even in this small matter of providing a flower for his button-hole that she is beginning her duties as a wife.

They are about together all through the happy summer days; sometimes no farther than the garden or the ruins—sometimes riding far afield with the Squire—sometimes climbing the hills or exploring distant villages with Mr. Petherick and his trusty dogs for their companions. One day they spend the sultry afternoon quite alone on the bank of the Pennant, which just here rushes like a cataract between steep walls of moss-greened crag—rocky boulders in whose clefts and crevices tender ferns grow thick and green. There is a narrow and somewhat perilous wooden bridge across this torrent, which is one of the features of the neighbourhood.

Here Editha and Herman have seated themselves in the sultry after-luncheon hours, sheltered by a tangled mass of greenery, in which oak, ash, and alder, birch and sycamore, are mixed together anyhow, for beneath the crags there is abundance of dark rich loam in which the gnarled roots find their sustenance.

Editha is seated on a low bank, hemming a child's pinafore—those busy fingers of hers clothe half the cottage children about Lochwithian. Herman lies at her feet, looking up at little flecks of warm blue sky shining among the tangled leaves. The sun steeps that summer roof and sheds a greenish light, as through the stained glass of a minster window.

Herman yawns and then sighs—the yawn expresses the blissfulness of repose, the sigh is in self-reproach.

'Not a line written since I came to Lochwithian,' he says, 'and I meant to be so industrious.'

'I try to leave your mornings free always, Herman; but you come strolling out into the garden or down to the village just when I fancy you are so busy.'

'Elective affinity, dearest. I find myself drawn towards you whether I will or not. I open my desk, and dip my pen in the ink, and wait for an idea. But when the idea comes it is only Editha. What is Editha doing? I must go and look for Editha. That is

the nearest approach to an idea that I can dig out of my inner consciousness. The fact is, I am too happy to be industrious. If you do not consent to our being married very soon, Editha, I shall be a ruined man.'

'You expect to be not quite so happy when we are married,' says Editha, smiling at the little pinafore.

'No, love, but to be less tumultuously blest. There will be a calm reassuring certainty—the knowledge that you are mine till the end of my days, the sense that our life is laid down in a groove, and that we have nothing to do but travel smoothly on. When we come back from Switzerland, and I settle down in my own little den at Fulham—my books of reference at my elbow, my publisher getting impatient—I shall write as if by steam. Here every bird's song is an invocation to the spirit of idleness. Shall it be the fifteenth of September, love?' he pleads, raising himself upon his elbow, and bringing himself nearer Editha, so near that he is in some danger of having his countenance wounded by that busy needle.

He is talking of his wedding-day, which has been a subject of discussion between them for some time.

'Dear Herman, you know that I want one more year at home,' replies Editha seriously; 'I want to spend another year with Ruth, and among the poor people I have known so long. I want to make an honest end of my life here, and not wind it up suddenly as if I had grown tired of it.'

'Another year! My dear Editha, be reasonable. Think of the house taken and furnished, rent running on, taxes, furniture spoiling, walls mildewing, gilding tarnishing.'

'It was foolish of you to take a house so hurriedly,' says Editha reproachfully.

'Foolish to build my nest after St. Valentine's-day? Editha, am I to think that a few old women, affecting piety with an eye to the loaves and fishes—a flock of drawling nasal school-children, who know more of the multiplication table than their limited finances will ever bring into play—are to come between you and me, and doom me to a year of unsettled and solitary existence?'

'I am thinking of Ruth as well as of my pensioners and school-children.'

'Put Ruth out of the question. We have settled that Ruth is to lose very little of your society after you are married. I wish you'd put down that pinafore, Editha; the click-click of the needle disturbs the serenity of the atmosphere.'

Editha obeys without a word. She is likely to be that traitor in the camp of strong-minded womanhood, an obedient wife. Herman takes the industrious hand prisoner, and holds it during the rest of his discourse.

'Dear love, why should we not be married soon? My life is broken, disorganised, out of joint, till we begin the world together in our new home.'

A little more persuasion, and she yields the point. Ruth has told her that, if she is sure of her lover's worthiness, there is nothing to be gained by a long engagement. Her father is indifferent, seeing that she is determined to marry Herman Westray, whether the marriage be soon or late. Of herself, unaided, she is not strong enough to oppose Herman's wish; so it is settled that the marriage is to take place on the fifteenth of September, which, the almanac informs them, falls on a Thursday. They are at the end of July already, but the question of her trousseau not being paramount with Editha, it does not occur to her to object that a few weeks are much too short for preparation, from a dressmaker's point of view. She has no idea of spending half her small capital in finery. Her plentifully furnished wardrobe, her stock of rare old lace, inherited from her mother, will need no large additions to be ample for the requirements of a young matron. Very far from her thoughts are wedding finery and wedding festivities. She is inclined to search deeper into the beginning of things.

'Herman, what first made you think of me?' she asks, looking at his upturned face as he leans on his elbow, his head thrown back a little, his eyes lifted to hers. 'Our lives lie so far apart.'

'Perhaps that was the very fact that set me thinking of you,' he answers, quite willing to be questioned, rather pleased indeed to analyse his feelings. 'You came into my life like a creature out of a purer and better world, and my heart went to you naturally. If I had met you at a ball, just in the beaten way of society, I might have thought you the handsomest woman in the room, but I should hardly have known you to be the one woman among womankind whose love were best worth winning.'

'I don't quite understand how you were to find that out here,' Editha replies, smiling at his praise. 'First, I am a very ordinary person; and next, you saw very little of me.'

'I heard your praises from others, and I saw you in your home with your sister—the giver of gladness in your narrow circle. I saw and heard enough to send me away with your image in my heart. I did not surrender myself too readily; I made believe to myself that I was not in love with you; but the book I wrote last winter was one long *tête-à-tête* with you, and I was perfectly wretched till we met again.'

'Herman,' Editha says gravely, coming to that one awful question which no woman can refrain from asking—though the answer, if honestly given, is sure to make her miserable—'did you ever care for any one else? Your first love—to whom was that given, and why did it end unhappily?'

Herman winces slightly at the question.

'First love, Editha, is the offspring of fancy, and has its source in the brain rather than the heart. First love is like one's first champagne—a transient intoxication. Mine came to a very prosaic end. The lady jilted me without a day's warning.'

'Then she must have been unworthy of you.'

'Not unworthy of me, perhaps, but unworthy of my regret. I was wise enough to discover that in time, and wasted none upon her,' adds Herman carelessly.

Editha is grateful for his candour, and yet a little disappointed, for it would have been so much sweeter if Herman could have told her that she herself was his first love.

'Were you very much in love with the lady?' she asks, taking up the little pinafore again and smoothing down the hem with extreme nicety.

'Over head and ears; but it was calf-love, remember. The girl was accomplished, diabolically clever; not absolutely beautiful, but graceful beyond measure. Just the kind of girl to bewitch an undergraduate. I thought her simply the most charming creature I had ever seen or dreamed of. We had been children together, and one day she beamed upon me suddenly as a woman.'

'Perhaps she was influenced by others when she jilted you,' hazards Editha, slow to believe that any one could voluntarily play him false.

'Possibly.'

'Did she marry for money?'

'The man she married had expectations, I believe, but they were never realised. He died a few years after his marriage, and left his widow in very indifferent circumstances.'

'Have you ever seen her since then?'

This is trying. Herman digs his elbow into a little hillock of moss, and endeavours to look unconcerned.

'Yes, I have met her once in a way in society.'

'But not often?'

'No; our lives lie far apart. Editha,' he adds solemnly, seeing the little cloud upon her face, 'be jealous neither of the past nor of the future. No rival can ever come between us two.'

'Are you quite sure of that, Herman?'

'As sure as that I live and hold your hand in mine,' he answers, clasping it fondly.

'Because, if there is the shadow of doubt in your mind, leave me my old life. When we are married, and I have left home and father and sister, and everybody and everything I have loved and lived for until now, for your sake, I shall be unreasonably exacting perhaps, and ask for more than you can give, if you cannot give me all your heart.'

'It is yours, love—yours and no other's. It went forth to you gladly, as a bird flies to meet the summer. It is yours for ever and ever—the for ever of man's brief span.'

'Mine in God's for ever, I trust,' she answers solemnly. 'I cannot imagine a heaven in which we shall not see and know our friends again.'

Herman kisses the fair white hand for sole reply: and they are happy, fondly believing in each other and a love unassailable by time or change.

CHAPTER XIV.

'So, she leaning on her husband's arm, they turned homeward by a rosy path which the gracious sun struck out for them in its setting. And O there are days in this life, worth life and worth death. And O what a bright old song it is, that O 'tis love, 'tis love, 'tis love, that makes the world go round.'

It is the last week, the last day of Editha's home life. All that she has loved and tended and created and cared for in that placid circle of home is to be surrendered at eleven o'clock to-morrow morning in favour of Herman Westray. She may come back to Lochwithian Priory—she means to return thither often—but it will be as a guest and in some measure a stranger. She is touched with sadness on this bright September morning as she counts her loss, wandering slowly round the old gardens alone, saying good-bye to every rose-tree and all the familiar flowers in the humble little greenhouses that have been built out of her pocket-money and after her own design. To all intents and purposes she has been sole mistress of Lochwithian Priory for the last five years, Ruth being no more than adviser, and the Squire content to rub along easily, just able to meet the demands of his bailiff, who hungers for machinery on the home-farm, and is eager to follow the march of agricultural progress.

Here, by the fountain on whose margin they sat when first he came to the Priory, Herman finds his betrothed. She is looking down at the restless goldfish dreamily, with a cluster of pale tea-roses in her hand.

'Dear love, I have been looking for you everywhere. What the waterworks turned on already, Editha? I thought young ladies reserved the supply for the wedding morning.'

'I have been saying good-bye to the garden, Herman,' she answers, smiling through her tears.

'You should have made it *au reservoir*, dearest.'

'It will never be my garden any more, Herman.'

'And for sole exchange I give you a lawn about the size of tablecloth, with one immemorial elm, a weeping-willow, a tree, two of the feathery coniferous tribe, an ancient mulberry

corner, and a pink horse-chestnut. A remarkable collection, I think, for a suburban garden.'

'I feel sure that it is lovely,' she answers, looking across the valley to the steep green slopes beyond, with one bold hill that seems to touch the sky. 'It will be so nice to have the river flowing past our lawn; but I am afraid that just at first I shall miss the hills. They are a part of my life, somehow. One of the first things I can remember is standing on the top of that green peak looking down at the Priory, all the windows shining in the evening sun, and thinking that the house was lighted for a grand party. I was quite a little child, and had strayed out of the garden and climbed the hill by myself, and was half way down again before my nurse found me.'

'Enterprising little soul! We will take a holiday in the hill country twice a year, Editha. You shall not suffer nostalgia. And, remember, I am going to introduce you to the monarch of mountains, so you needn't weep for these Cambrian ant-hills. What are you going to do with yourself all day?'

Herman has only returned from London the day before yesterday, and is residing on this occasion under Mr. Petherick's hospitable roof, but contrives nevertheless to spend most of his time with Editha.

'I must say good-bye to the people at Llanmoel.'

'Is that the eccentric little settlement at the base of that great hill you showed me the other day?'

'Yes.'

'Let us set off at once, then, and make a day of it.'

'But I'm afraid it will tire you, Herman. It is a long walk, and there are several people I want to see. And then Mr. Petherick may think it unkind of you to desert him.'

'That best of men has given me my liberty till we meet at your father's dinner-table. And as to being tired of a long day with you, love—why it will be an instalment of our honeymoon.'

They set out together in the fresh bright noontide, Herman carrying a good-sized basket full of keepsakes for Editha's pensioners—young women she has taught as children when no more than a child herself; old people she has ministered to almost from her babyhood, when she went with her nurse to carry small comforts to the poorest among the peasantry, fair as a child-angel to their delighted eyes.

Their way lies for the most part through meadows—meadows of all shapes and sizes—with high tangled hedgerows and steep ferny banks, which remind Herman of his native Devonshire, and just a little of that summer day when Myra Clitheroe promised to forego fame for his sake. From the last of the meadows they emerge on the bank of the Pennant, and cross a rustic suspension bridge, and

enter a hilly road, little more than a lane as to width, and as stony as it is picturesque.

They talk for a long time of Herman's books, past, present, and to come, in which Editha is intensely interested. She will not be one of those wives who prefer the *Family Herald* to their husband's masterpieces, or who look upon a new novel from the marital pen as the source of a new drawing-room carpet. She questions him closely about the shadows of his brain, and he finds that his creations are more real to her than they are even to himself.

'You must have been deeply in love that first time, Herman, or you could never have written your first novel,' she says, that first romance being a record of passionate disappointed love.

'My dearest, I am happy to say I never committed forgery, yet the critics were good enough to pronounce that the fraudulent banker's clerk in my second novel is very true to life.'

Editha shakes her head dubiously. She is not able to explain her convictions, but she feels that the mechanism of that second novel is art, while the passion of love and anger in the first is nature.

He tells her the plan of his new book—the story which is half written, and which he stands pledged to complete before Christmas—and finds it very pleasant to confide his ideas to a thoroughly sympathetic companion. He is not a man prone to impart his fancies, but he finds a new habit growing upon him since he and Editha have been plighted lovers. He is not content nowadays till he has told her his last inspiration.

They loiter on the way a good deal, and it is two o'clock as they ascend the stony lane. There is another meadow to cross before they come to Llanmoel, which secluded village is not on any particular road, but seems to have been dropped down anyhow among the fields. A meadow brings them to the church, which in architectural pretensions might be a barn, and which modestly hides itself under an enormous yew—a yew so gigantic and intrusive that one great branch has grown close up to the church wall, and has had to be lopped lest it should knock down that rural temple.

Grazing placidly among the lopsided tombstones, and a family vault or two with trees growing out of its decayed and broken stonework, Herman and Editha find a donkey, evidently belonging to some privileged freeholder, and serenely indifferent to their approach. The clumsy old porch of plaster and woodwork, ivy-grown, with a Norman arch over the church door, and a little bit of quaintly carven stonework whereon blunt-nosed angels are depicted, the narrow loophole windows in the rough-cast wall, the square wooden tower, are all very much like the little church down by the shaky bridge; and Herman, not being archæologically given, does not desire to survey the interior of the fane. So they cross the churchyard, and go out of a little gate which brings them to a lane leading to

nowhere in particular, a row of one-story cottages, thatched and in the last stage of decay, a forge, and a wooden building turned endways to the lane, which Herman supposes to be a dilapidated barn, until, looking up, he perceives a sign hanging from the angle nearest the road, and is thus made aware that it is 'The New Inn. M. A. Gredby. Licensed to sell beer, spirits, tobacco, &c.'

M. A. Gredby is one of Editha's pensioners; so Herman is introduced to the interior of the New Inn, which consists, or appears to consist, of the public room and a back kitchen. A corkscrew staircase squeezed into a corner faintly suggests sleeping accommodation in the sloping roof. The public room is low and dark, the ceiling encumbered by huge beams ponderous enough to sustain the upper chambers of a mediæval fortress. One side of the apartment is swallowed up by the open hearth and chimney; but, as M. A. Gredby's customers are in the habit of sitting in the chimney-corners, and making much of the fire even in summer-time, this is by no means lost space. Two old men in smock-frocks are seated on a bench inside the chimney to-day, smoking long clay pipes and looking at the fire.

The apartment, small in itself, and rendered smaller by its architectural characteristics, is farther reduced by an overplus of furniture—ancient high-backed windsor chairs, ponderous tables, and a horsehair-covered sofa of clumsy proportions; garniture pendent from the cross-beams in the way of onions, bacon, and a netful of apples. The one latticed window is obscured by a variety of small vases designed to attract the eye of local childhood, but which seem to have missed their end, as the sugarsticks have the pale and clouded look of advanced age, the hardbake has faded from brown to gray, the black-jack has oozed through its paper covering, and the battledores display more fly-marks than parchment.

Into this dark little den Herman peers wonderingly, while Mrs. Gredby pours forth her rapturous greeting. She is not a native of the district, and takes a pride in declaring the fact.

'To think that you should come to see me, Miss Editha, to-day of all days, and your wedding to-morrow. Yes, I saw it in the paper, and I mean to walk over, if I drop on the way, to see you in your wedding-dress. And I've been trying to persuade my old gentleman; but, lor, he hasn't no spirit, he hasn't, and says he can't walk so far. He's a Welshman, you see, and he hasn't the spirit for it. I walk into Llandrysak and back again every market-day, and make light of it, though I shall be sixty-five next birthday. But then I was born at Cheltenham; I don't belong to *this* place.'

Mrs. Gredby has lived at the New Inn for the last forty years, but has not yet got over her contempt for Llanmoel, which is only second in degree to her contempt for her old gentleman.

A grunt of acquiescence or negation from one of the old men

smoking in the chimney-corner identifies him with the subject of Mrs. Gredby's discourse.

'Ah, you may grunt and grumble,' exclaims that lady, 'but if you had a bounce o' spirit you'd walk over to Lochwithian to see Miss Editha in her wedding-dress.'

'I seed her father married,' mumbles the old man, without taking his pipe out of his mouth; 'that'll do for me. I seed her mother buried; that was a rare sight, that was—sixteen murning curches. That'll last my time. Miss has got my blessing wher-over she goes; but I ain't got strength for no more sight-seeing.'

'I've brought Mr. Westray, the gentleman I'm going to marry, to see you,' says Editha.

'And a fine-grown gent he is too,' exclaims Mrs. Gredby; 'but, without offence to him, I wish he'd been Mr. Hetheridge. I'm no Welshwoman, thank God; if I was, I daresay I should take it more to heart that you're not going to marry a Welshman. But I do wish it had been Mr. Hetheridge—such a noble fresh-coloured young gentleman—and that you'd been going to settle among us.'

Editha blushes crimson, and Herman feels that his foot is not on his native heather, and that his name is a matter of indifference to Mrs. Gredby.

'Mr. Westray is a very famous gentleman in London,' says Editha; 'he writes books which people admire very much.'

'Tracks?' inquires Mrs. Gredby, somewhat scornfully.

'No, not tracts.'

'I'm glad of that. There's too many Methodies in this part of the country; they're always pestering with their blessed tracks. I like my Bible as I like my drop of spirits—neat. I don't care about having Scripture chopped into little bits and mixed up with other people's notions.'

'That reminds me, Mrs. Gredby, that I've brought you a Bible for a keepsake, and a couple of silver spoons for you and Mr. Gredby, so that you may think of me sometimes when you drink your tea.'

A small black teapot among the ashes on the hearth suggests that Mrs. Gredby is a confirmed tea-drinker.

'Bless your kind heart, miss, we don't want nothin' to remind us of you. We shall think of you often enough when you're settled up in London, which I'm told has growed into a very fine town, with a numbankmint and a wiadux, though not so genteel as my native place—Cheltenham. We shall think of you, Miss Editha, never fear.'

Editha extracts the Bible and the teaspoons from a variety of neat little packages in the basket. Both gifts are received with rapture, but it is clear that the teaspoons go nearest to Mrs. Gredby's heart. The Gredby initials—man and wife—have been engraved on each spoon.

'I never owned a silver teaspoon before, Miss Editha,' says the matron, 'though I come of a very respectable family. My mother had six teas and four salts, real silver, with King George and the leopard's head on them, besides a lion with his fore-paw lifted up, and a deal of ornamentation; but my eldest brother came into them, with the rest of the property, as heir-at-law, and kep' 'em, set out among the glass and chaneys on his chesaneer, till things went wrong with him, being a master carpenter in a small way, and the spoons was mortgaged to his creditors.'

Mrs. Gredby's old gentleman crawls feebly out of the chimney-corner to behold and admire the spoons, which he turns over in his horny palm as if they were natural curiosities.

After this it is time to say good-bye, and Mrs. Gredby dissolves into tears.

'I hope you wouldn't think it a liberty if I was to ask leaf to kiss you, Miss Editha, having knowd you from a child,' she says pathetically; and Editha submits to be kissed by the proprietress of the New Inn, who doesn't often taste butcher's meat—the nearest butcher living three miles off—and who makes up for that deprivation by a copious use of onions. Herman, suffering sympathetic torture, makes a wry face during the operation.

'And now,' says Mrs. Gredby, making a dart at the little black pot, 'you must have a cup of tea and a bit of currant-cake after your walk.'

Editha protests that she has not time to take refreshment, but the energetic M. A. Gredby snatches some cups and saucers from one of the numerous shelves which encumber the walls, and spreads them on a massive iron trestle. From another shelf she produces a mysterious-looking substance, of a pale-greenish hue, ornamented with black spots which look like defunct flies.

'It's a trifle mowldy, miss,' she apologises, as she slices this substance; 'but I made it with my own hands, and it's genuwine.'

Editha and Herman decline the cake on the ground of feeble appetite, but consent to take a little tea. That infusion is very black and very strong, and tastes so much like senna, that Herman is fearful lest Mrs. Gredby should be practising upon him for his ulterior benefit, after the manner of careful nurses with small children.

After making a faint pretence of drinking tea, Editha and her betrothed take leave of Mr. and Mrs. Gredby, and proceed to visit the smaller dwellings in the settlement. Everywhere Editha is received with the same tokens of affection, wept over, kissed, adored, while Herman stands looking on. It is sweet to him to see how much she is beloved, and his heart is stirred with a secret pride as he thinks how willingly she has surrendered all this worship and allegiance, her happy useful life among her native hills, to follow his uncertain fortunes.

The basket contains keepsakes for every one—always something pretty and useful and appropriate, which appears in every case to be the object most ardently desired by the recipient. Bright neckerchiefs, lace collars, Bibles, Testaments, inkstands, needlecases, come out of the basket, and elicit rapturous admiration.

'You'll not be forgotten when I am gone,' Editha tells her various pensioners; 'my sister will take care of you. You shall have your half-pound of tea every other Saturday the same as usual, Mrs. Davis.'

'It isn't that I'm thinking of, miss,' answers a hard-working matron. 'It's the sight of your bright face we shall miss.'

Llanmoel duly visited, Herman and Editha enter a lane—wild, rugged, and picturesque—which turns off at an angle by the side of the New Inn.

'Where are we going now?' asks Herman.

Editha points skyward.

'What, going to heaven so soon! I thought we were to be married first, and translated together.'

'I wish you wouldn't talk like that, Herman. You see the bank yonder. We are going to a farmhouse near the top.'

'I see a mountain, like Brighton racecourse turned up endways, dotted with sheep.'

'That's where we are going.'

'Do people live up there, for example?'

The lane is delightful—not always narrow; it widens by and by into a patch of wooded waste, with here and there a pool of water, fern-fringed, shadowed with blackberry and alder bushes, old hawthorns lichened and gray; all things wild, neglected, beautiful. Then the lane narrows again, and twists and wriggles up the hill-side, and the valley widens as they rise above it; and Cymbries Bank and the Roman mound rise up before them far away to the west, in the glow of afternoon sunlight.

'Imagine anybody living up here,' cries Herman, 'alone among the Immensities, and nearly a day's journey from the butcher!'

Steeper and steeper grows the lane, screened with hazel-bushes and wild apple, hawthorn and elder, till it brings them into a triangular farmyard just under the summit of the hill. Such a lonely old farmhouse, decently kept and prosperous looking, the huge chimney-stacks composing about one-half of the building; a flight of steps leads up to the low wooden door, innocent of knocker or bell.

Herman thumps the portal with his stick, whereat a simple-minded-looking calf puts its head out of a shed in the yard and lows plaintively, and an unseen dog barks indignantly, but there is no other answer. Herman knocks again and again, but with no farther effect than irritating the invisible dog and puzzling the mild-faced calf, whose mother stares vacantly at the intruders.

'I daresay Maggie and Jenny have gone to Llandrysak,' says Editha. 'I should like to have seen them. They were my prize scholars three years ago, and the prettiest girls in the neighbourhood. Would you like to go to the top of the hill?'

'Having come so far, it would be dastardly to desist,' replies Herman. 'A friend of mine—a famous Alpine traveller in his way—told me that when he had got within twenty feet of the summit of Mont Blanc he would have given the world to lie down then and there, and give up life and the task together; but he crawled to the top somehow.'

They leave the farmyard by a narrow ledge which leads upward, and from the hilltop survey the world below, seated side by side upon a low stone wall, which for some unknown reason divides the summit. To the right and left of them are hills as high as that they have climbed, one clothed with bracken, the other bare. Below them winds a mountain torrent in the cleft of the hills. They can see the little wooden tower of Llanmoel church in the valley beneath, and far away in the clear blue the scattered white houses of Llandrysak; but of a human being, near or far, there is no sign.

'I can almost distinguish the Cambria, and Dewrance playing croquet,' says Herman.

Mr. Dewrance has come down to assist at to-morrow's ceremony. He has been succeeded at Llandrysak by a gentleman of an Evangelical turn, and the pretty little white and gray stone church on the common has made a retrograde movement, which is grateful to the native mind, but unwelcome to English visitors.

They sit for a little while curiously silent, moved to deepest thoughts by the serenity of the scene. On the threshold of her new life Editha's thoughts are mournful. Will he always love her, this stranger for whom she barter her nearest and dearest? Of Ruth's affection, of Ruth's sympathy, she is utterly sure; but his love may be a thing of impulse, and change or wane in the years to come. She looks at him wonderingly, fearfully, being certain of so little about him but the one absorbing truth that she loves him.

'Four o'clock, dearest, and we are between six and seven miles from the sound of the dressing-bell,' exclaims Herman, feeling that the melodious tinkling of a distant sheep-bell will speedily beguile him to slumber unless he bestirs himself somehow.

'We shall go home faster than we came, Herman; the way is almost all down-hill.'

'Ah, that's what makes the progress of life so rapid after five-and-twenty—it is all down-hill.'

They go back to the farmhouse. Herman assails the door with his stick again, and again in vain. But half-way down the lane they meet the farmer's daughters, dark-eyed, blooming, lovely, carrying heavy baskets, and delighted at the sight of Editha.

'I should have been so sorry if I'd gone away without you, Maggie, and you too, Jenny.'

'O, if you please, miss, we are to be in the churchyard morrow with all your old scholars.'

'Really! That is kind.'

Maggie's and Jenny's keepsakes are fished out of the box and there are kisses and kindly words of farewell.

'That was a little better than being kissed by Mrs. Gredby,' says Herman, as he and Editha continue their journey.

'Poor Mrs. Gredby! When my brothers were little boys was their great delight to visit Mrs. Gredby, and sit in the chimney corner with old Mr. Gredby. He used to make them pea-shoots and to lend them an old gun long before they were allowed to have guns of their own. I'm afraid to think how much mouldy cake must have eaten. I know Mrs. Gredby used to give them sausage and black pudding, and all manner of dreadful things.'

'I daresay your Indian brother is suffering for those juvenile indiscretions now, and calling it liver,' replies Herman.

They arrive at Lochwithian only just in time for the dinner bell. The Priory is full of guests. Editha's clerical brother arrived on the scene, with his wife and two eldest girls, who are to be bridesmaids. Two young ladies of ancient Welsh family come from a distant mansion for the same purpose. Mr. Dewar is there in readiness for to-morrow, and Mr. Petherick comes to dinner. Editha has no more time for mournful thoughts till that night, when she kneels beside Ruth's sofa, and confides in the vague doubts and fears to that sympathetic listener. Ruth's words are full of comfort.

'Dearest, your own heart has chosen,' she says. 'I think it is a divine instinct in a heart as pure and true as yours. Why should we fear the issue?'

'It seems so hard to leave you, Ruth, so selfish. But you like him, don't you, Ruth? You can trust him?'

'Yes, dear, if he will only be true to the better part of his nature: and with you beside him he can hardly be otherwise.'

To-morrow, and they stand side by side in the beautified church before an altar glorious with all white flowers that bloom at this season—a church crowded with loving faces, many of them teachers for at Lochwithian this marriage is in some wise a public affair.

The autumn sun shines warm and bright. School-children, young women who were Editha's scholars a few years ago, strew the path from the church door to the Priory gates, and cast their tributary flowers before the bridal pair. To young and old Editha in her white dress and veil, seems like an angel.

The crowd does not lessen when the wedding party have

back to the house ; the people wait to see the last of their favourite. Mrs. Gredby is there, splendidly got up in a Paisley shawl of many colours and a green-gauze bonnet. There are two or three national hats come from remote villages, but smart bonnets of the last metropolitan fashion prevail.

There is to be a tea-drinking in the afternoon on a large scale for old and young, and in the mean time an itinerant vendor dispenses cakes and sweetstuff to the excited throng. At last the carriage which is to convey bride and bridegroom to the Llandrysak station appears before the porch, and, after an interval, Editha reappears in her simple travelling-dress, leaning on her father's arm, Herman on the other side, and the brother and sister-in-law, cousins, friends, and clergy in the background.

They drive off amidst a burst of cheers which the hillsides echo thunderously, Editha looking back at her old home till the road winds and shuts it from her sight.

'Never quite my own home any more,' she murmurs sadly. 'Good-bye, happy days of youth !'

OXFORD RAFFLES

No. I.

A HISTORY of luck would be both instructing and amusing. As a rule, it is believed that those who obtain Fortune's smile in trials of chance succeed to her frowns in the general run of things. Whether this should be regarded as an absolute truism or as a popular delusion, we are not in a position to affirm, owing to the absence of data from which to form a universal conclusion. As illustrating, however, the zigzag rotation of that which goes by the name of luck, we venture to submit the following anecdotes, culled from the dead past of academic memories, anent the subject of raffles; simply premising that we should define a raffle as the plainest game of chance, where the odds are heaviest against the gambler, and where the vendor plays the old-world rôle of the clever croupier, 'Heads I win, tails you lose.'

In the year when Caractacus won the Derby, a certain quiet parson resident in St. Frideswide's College, Oxford, put his pound into the Art-Union lottery, and drew a bronze model of Caractacus, the ancient Briton. This statuette, being on a large scale, was out of all proportion to his small college rooms; so he took it reluctantly to an art-dealer in the town, who, after declining to give one-fifth of the figure at which it was valued by the Art-Union, offered, nevertheless, to raffle it at the full price at a guinea per ticket. This proposal was readily accepted by our black dragoon, and presently the various colleges and halls throughout the University learnt by advertisement that 'a statuette of Caractacus, executed in bronze by the late famous sculptor Signor Scagliola, the property of a member of the University,' would be raffled for, under certain conditions, which were duly stated *in extenso*.

So far everything appeared promising for the vendor. Unfortunately, however, in this world of mutation there is many a slip between the cup and the lip. It so happened that the above advertisement met the eye of no less a personage than Mr. Doncaster St. Leger of St. Boniface. Now Mr. Doncaster, though in some respects his powers of calculation were almost unlimited, never could bring them to bear upon certain illustrated problems set by perverse examiners in the schools. In short, not to be too hard upon him, he was about as stupid a dunce as could be found within the four walls of St. Boniface at that time; and that is saying great deal. This young gentleman, then, was at once attracted by the word Caractacus. He had never, you may be sure, heard

such an historical being as the brave old British lion who contrived for a time to baffle the Roman legions. Not he. History, you see, he would inform you, was not in his line. He took up mathematics for his second schools, and 'if it hadn't happened that that "fellar Euclid" had been gifted with a mind as complicated as a spider's web, he might have done the trick two terms ago.' He had, however, landed a nice round sum on the equine representative of the hero of romantic history, and dear indeed to his soul was the name of an animal which had enabled him to square his promissory notes to the head waiter at the Crozier Hotel, and to partially satisfy the rabid thirst for gold exhibited terminally by Shark the livery-stable-keeper, and Whale the tailor.

Mr. Doncaster St. Leger was perambulating the classic 'High' just before the witching hour of dinner, in order to get a little fresh air introduced into his inner man, which seemed to be replete with cigar-smoke and chalk, he having spent the afternoon in Giggery's orchard-room, when, happening to stop and stare in at Chisel's window—Chisel was the art-dealer before alluded to—he was met with the following startling announcement:

CARACTACUS!

This exquisite statuette by Signor Scagliola will be raffled for to-morrow.

TICKETS, ONE GUINEA.

N.B. Early application is requested, as only a few remain unallotted.

Mr. Doncaster St. Leger positively gasped as he read these words, to him so pregnant with meaning. He groped in his several pockets hastily and greedily. Where could his purse have got to? He was a man of a sanguine temperament, and venturesome withal. To see him fling down his coin on any remote chance you would imagine him a millionaire. Best of all, he never grinned when he won, and he never frowned when he lost. On the contrary: in all money transactions his countenance preserved the meaningless gravity of plaster-of-Paris. He felt convinced at the present moment that by a bold investment in tickets he could secure, as an heirloom to his family, the image in bronze of a quadruped whom, in his enthusiasm, he considered a credit to his owner, his country, ay, to creation itself. But unluckily you cannot buy raffle-tickets without coin. Even in Oxford, where you can get credit for almost anything, commodities of this class have to be paid for. And, to add to his discomfiture, not only were the hall-bells beginning to jangle for dinner, and therefore there would be nothing left of the fish but the fins and backbone in a couple of trices, but, further, who should appear looming in the distance but the most noble the Marquis Asnapper of Cardinal College, a plutocrat of boundless wealth, and himself a conscientious patron of the turf. If only this titled personage should happen to spot Mr. Chisel's

placard, Mr. Doncaster St. Leger felt sure that he would buy every ticket that was left.

Not that he need have worried his mind on that account. The fact was, that only one ticket out of sixty had as yet been purchased, and that one by Mr. Ignatius Alban, a weakish Ritualist, who somehow got into his head the notion that Caractacus was a Byzantine saint. Mr. Chisel, however, from long and varied experience, had concluded that some pressure is advisable in order to persuade the undergraduate mind to jump at a hasty conclusion. Hence the mendacious 'N.B.' which ended his advertisement.

A moment's reflection convinced Mr. Doncaster St. Leger that to hesitate was to be lost. Consequently he advanced hastily, and grappling the arm of the young marquis in a way which that most noble individual was disposed to resent as impertinence, he exclaimed:

'I say, Asnapper, lend me a tenner till after hall, that's a good fellow.'

'No, I won't,' replied the marquis, not so much as condescending to take his toothpick from between his august molars.

A less vivacious and more modest man would have looked at the fool he felt after this shut-up. Not so Mr. Doncaster, who, after digging his fingers playfully into his friend's aristocratic ribs, which were well protected by gorgeous apparel, and shouting, 'Blow you, then!' bounded away as hard as his legs would carry him in the direction of St. Boniface College.

A few seconds afterwards, and the front quadrangle resounded with loud and incessant cries of 'Messenger!'

Mercury, thus entreated, could but appear. You would imagine that the individual selected by the superior wisdom of college authority to run errands would, in some one feature at least, resemble the ideal messenger of Jove. He would be fleet-footed, glib-tongued, elastic of gait, young, and brisk. He need not have wings on his heels, but he would be indued with the faculty of getting over ground rapidly. In Oxford, however, they manage things quite differently from anywhere else in the region of common sense. Old Box, the St. Boniface messenger, might have been a Mercury fit for Olympus thirty years ago. But truth compels us to add, that as he shambled towards Mr. Doncaster St. Leger he looked something altogether the converse. His head was a little lower than his shoulders, which were indeed elephantine. His pace was slow, measured, and *qua* knees a trifle rickety. His countenance exhibited, not only no signs of intellect, but almost none of consciousness. He was never drunk and never sober. He would occupy half an hour in discharging a message a hundred yards distant. But, in spite of his apparent stupidity and his invariable tardiness, he possessed one grand mental

and moral gift—memory. The man would listen to twenty different orders, gorge them in his extraordinary brain, and perform each and all to the letter. The head of St. Boniface ruled that a servant of the college thus gifted must be retained at all hazards.

'Look here, Box,' cried Mr. St. Leger, panting for his dinner. 'Look here, stupid. Take this ten-pound note to Chisel's; you understand, Chisel's; and buy me as many raffle-tickets for Caractacus as you can. If you can't get ten, get nine, or eight, or any number. Stick to him, Box, mind you, and don't you swallow any of his gammon. He'll pretend he's only two or three left. Hey? What?'

'Tickets for what, sir?' inquired Mercury, who could not grip that ugly polysyllable Caractacus.

'Caractacus!' shouted Mr. St. Leger.

'All right, sir,' was the cheery reply. 'I understand you. Ten tickets for Cactus, or—'

'Caractacus!' gasped the young man; and at once rushed headlong to satisfy the urgent claims of appetite in the college hall.

It may perhaps be wholly unnecessary to explain that Mr. Box the messenger did succeed in obtaining the full amount of tickets he required; Mr. Chisel, under the circumstances, kindly putting down the odd ten shillings to Mr. St. Leger's account, which account being, so far as the *first* item went, over twelve months' standing, was duly rendered on the day following with an increment of five per cent interest.

Five per cent interest on twelve hours' credit! It's a way we have in the 'Varsity. But it does not drive dull care away. Rather not.

Precisely at two o'clock on the following day a select company were assembled at Chisel's shop. The most noble the marquis occupied the centre, having purchased one ticket. Mr. Alban the Ritualist was in the rear, being ashamed of himself for no particular reason, and afraid of the illustrious Asnapper because he happened to have a big handle to his name. Whilst, entering the shop, you may behold the supple and horsey proportions of Mr. Doncaster St. Leger, who, after winking at the nobleman and glaring at the modest Rit., advanced boldly towards the proprietor of the artistic establishment.

'Now, Chisel,' he exclaimed happily, 'trot out the quadruped.'

'I don't comprehend your meaning, Mr. St. Leger,' was the respectful reply.

'What a duffing old file you must be, then! Caractacus, of course.'

'He, he! Ve-ry good,' sniggered Mr. Chisel. Then turning to the marquis, 'Mr. St. Leger, my lord, allers do compare great things with small. It's a fancy of 'is.' This by way of apology for Mr. St. Leger's flippancy.

'Yes?' answered the marquis patronisingly.

'When is the—ha—lottery—hum—drawing to take place?' inquired Mr. Alban very glumly of the cringing Chisel.

'Well, my lord and gentlemen,' responded Mr. Chisel somewhat nervously, 'I think we'd best proceed to business. But I must inform you that the howner have bought in several tickets owin' to their not a-bein' all subscribed.'

This was not an answer to Mr. Alban's question. However, Mr. Chisel, remarking that 'it was as sweet a work of hart as hever hentered 'is 'ouse,' motioned the company to an inner chamber, where on the table stood the bronze statuette in all its glory. Lord Asnapper proceeded at once to inspect it with the air of a connoisseur.

'Bother it!' muttered Mr. St. Leger, snapping his fingers. He was growing impatient. 'What the doose is this? Why don't Chisel show us the horse?'

'Horse! What horse?' asked the marquis.

'Why Caractacus, of course.'

'This is Caractacus,' was the prompt response.

'This!' cried Mr. Doncaster St. Leger. 'Why, this is a naked savage!'

'This!' volunteered Mr. Alban, forgetting his shyness. 'Why, it hasn't got a nimbus!'

'C'ractyeus, gents,' interposed Mr. Chisel explanatorily, 'was a hancient Britting.'

'Caractacus be—'

The remainder of the sentence was, perhaps, fortunately absorbed by the wildly-retreating footsteps of Mr. St. Leger.

He went down the next morning to escape the volcano of ridicule which surrounded him; and it is not quite certain whether he did not seek refuge at the Australian gold-diggings.

As for the raffle, it need scarcely be added that the most noble drew the prize on his single ticket. Luck, as we know, always follows luck; and the people who expect to win in any turn of the wheel against a millionaire are more daft than idiots. Where skill is concerned, brains may carry the day; but for a man born with copper or a silver spoon in his mouth to back his luck against the favourite of Fortune born with the gold spoon adhering to his gump seems the height of insensate folly, especially when, like our friend Mr. Alban the Ritualist, he cannot afford to lose.

Immediately after the publication of that most charming but lesque of Oxford life, *Verdant Green*, which certainly succeeded in depicting the University as a compound of beer, skittles, and bulldogs, the world-wide notoriety obtained by Huz his first-born and Buz his brother—or as our dean, who was an accurate Hebraist

repute, used to render them in the course of the lectionary, 'Hoots and Boots'—fired the undergraduate soul with ambition to possess a Haz if not a Buz, a Hoots if not a Boots. Filthy Lucre in those days did a roaring trade, although how he escaped hydrophobia is a mystery. His cottage—well stocked, by the way, with babies—was always crowded with the canine species.

A rabid dog would bite him in five different places, so that he would appear streaming with ichor.

'It's his playfulness, sir,' the man would aver, no ways disconcerted.

Another quadruped, who assuredly in some previous state of existence must have been a limpet, would nail himself on to Lucre's calf, and refuse to be removed, even when the ordinary process of biting his tail was adopted by way of persuasion.

'A dawg of the right sort' would be the natural remark to issue from the wounded man's lips. Pain could not rattle his temper.

Of all envied undergraduates of that period let Mr. Scarsdale of Brazenface bear the palm. He *had* got a bulldog. You never set eyes on such a bulldog. Its chest was simply a type of latitude. Its under jaw protruded like a Zulu's. Above all, with the fidelity of a Bill Sykes's dog, it cared for no god or man but its master. From him it would put up with brutal usage without a murmur, a grunt, or a growl. But just let any one else approach it, and the consequences cannot easily be predicted. A favourite jest of Mr. Scarsdale's was to stroll down to the barges, where rowing men dispose of garments they have temporarily laid aside, or to the cricket-tennis—pavilions were then luxuries uninvented—and, after piling the raiment of a dozen unfortunates, to bid Muzzler 'Watch!' and then retreat. No human being dare approach the said Muzzler; they were often compelled to net the dog, *i. e.* to envelop him with a cricket net—and even then they could recover their clothes only at the imminent risk of being pinned.

Well, to come to the point, Mr. Scarsdale, his master, was a man with a talent for tumbling into serious hot water. He got plucked till the college very nearly turned him out neck and crop. He quarrelled so savagely with his father, that he found supplies cut off at a time when duns were nearly driving him mad. Lastly, he incurred a debt of honour which he was utterly unable to meet, and thereby ran the risk of being cut by his set—a contingency of all others the most appalling.

'What am I to do?' He appealed to his crony Bob Cherry.

Bob lit a cigar. Some minds never begin to act till they are involved in cloud.

'I am in an awful fix,' he continued. 'I owe coin all round, including the college. I've exhausted my credit, and the governor

has taken up a line as undutiful as ungracious. Give me your advice, dear old boy.'

'I have it,' cried Bob Cherry, after a few whiffs. 'You must raffle Muzzler. The dog has no end of a reputation. You can value him at forty guineas; and I'll bet you a bottle of wine you'll get every copper subscribed.'

'Perhaps,' answered his friend dryly; 'but, then, I don't want to part with my old friend. Hie, Muzzler, come here. That wouldn't suit you, eh?'

Muzzler came up from under the sofa as gentle as a lamb, and licked Mr. Scarsdale's hand quite lovingly.

'I couldn't do it, Cherry,' he said, something like a tear rising to the corner of his eye.

Mr. Bob Cherry, however, continued smoking, imperturbable as an oracle.

'Well?' growled Mr. Scarsdale, angry at his silence.

'Well, I give you my advice as a looker-on, who sees the best of the game. Raffle the dog, Scarsdale, and depend upon it the man who wins it will come and beg you to buy it back within twenty-four hours at your own figure.'

Mr. Scarsdale began to think.

'The dog,' he replied, 'would come home of his own accord; but—but—that would not do.'

'Put it at its worst, Scarsdale. Let us suppose that Clasher of Christ Church, or Nobbs of the Tavern, or any *bona-fide* sporting man, wins it, wouldn't he rather take a ten-pound note to be shot of a beast who would go mad without you, than stick to his bargain? Besides, the odds are even that a muff would get the old chap, and I know more than one who wouldn't so much as dare take him away with a chain.'

Mr. Scarsdale did not appear convinced. Circumstances, however, subsequently transpired which rendered it more than necessary that he should have some ready money; and as the mother threw her children to the wolves in order to save her life, so the man was compelled by iron destiny to part with the best friend he possessed in the wide world.

Bob Cherry got up the raffle for him. There was no great difficulty in raising the maximum sum; and so far as being relieved from hostile pressure by friends and foes, Mr. Scarsdale was happy. Nevertheless he could not bear the sight of the old dog; and deep was his grief that he actually demeaned himself so far as to write an exceedingly humble letter to his outraged parent, diplomatically enough asking not for money but forgiveness.

The raffle, however, came off, and the dog—like a poor slave—became the property of Mr. Fineekin of Wadham.

What possessed Mr. Fineekin to invest a sovereign in a raffle

or a bulldog? Mr. Fineekin was a little spare nervous creature, who generally took his walks abroad alone. Surely he was not the man to own a fighting brute by whose side a bear seemed lamb-like.

The fact is, Mr. Fineekin had during his solitary rambles encountered a hulking tramp who terrorised him out of a florin, and a bull who induced him to fly over the nearest hedge. Thought he savagely, 'If only I had a really savage dog, I should be safe from future molestation. Bulls would either flee or suffer for it, whilst tramps would not so much as dare to cross the road.' Cowardice it was, then, which induced Mr. Fineekin to covet Muzzler, and cowardice does not always pay its proprietor.

The raffle took place in Bob Cherry's room; and at its conclusion, Mr. Fineekin, as an out-college man and a stranger to all present, found himself under the necessity of carrying off his much-coveted prize. He therefore advanced with all the pluck at his command, and with a very silvern 'Poo' fellow! attempted to pat Muzzler.

The response was a terrible low growl, like the tuning of pedal pipes.

Mr. Fineekin ricocheted at once.

'You needn't be afraid of him,' remarked Bob Cherry sarcastically.

'D-do you th-think he'll b-bite?' stammered Mr. Fineekin, who was obviously in mortal terror, his countenance by degrees assuming the chlorid hue which is the immediate precursor of sea-sickness.

'They will bite at times,' answered Bob gravely, taking refuge in generalities.

'D-do they b-bite v-very hard?'

'They won't let go; that's all.' Mr. Cherry began to feel a malicious pleasure in the torture experienced by Mr. Fineekin.

'It's v-very awful,' gasped Mr. Fineekin. 'I—I think I'll be a cad to b-bwing the animal to my wooms.'

With which assurance Mr. Fineekin made for the door, and was hard to rush down the stairs like a Niagara or a comet in a hurry.

In a very few minutes a man appeared at Mr. Cherry's door. He had come, he said, to fetch a lectle dawg—a poopee, in fact—for Mr. Fineekin.

'There he is,' observed Mr. Cherry dryly.

'Be you his master, sir?'

'No, my man, I'm not. He did belong to Mr. Scarsdale, and Mr. Scarsdale ain't in college just now.'

'P'r'aps I'd better call again. I don't like 'is looks.'

'P'r'aps you hadn't. You must take him now or never. I'm not going to keep other people's dogs in my rooms. Why couldn't Mr. Fineekin take him away himself?'

Thus adjured the man crept up gingerly, and producing a from his pocket, prepared to affix it to Muzzler's collar. The dog eyed him for an instant suspiciously, and then, without ado in the way of vocalisation, as if aware of the man's intent, on to his leg firmly, and began to play with the muscles in a promising evil for his future pedestrianism.

You never heard a cad howl like that cad. His shrieks brought up a brace of scouts and a baker's dozen of undergraduates, including luckily Mr. Scarsdale, who happened to be entering the range. At a word from his former master Muzzler released sufferer in a state of lameness piteous to behold.

'I'll take him to Mr. Fineekin's rooms myself,' observed Scarsdale, and suiting the action to the word, he whistled the dog, who was licking his lips as if he rather approved of the of human blood, and sauntered off towards Wadham.

'Mr. Fineekin, sir?' said the porter; 'he's in No. 16 Back three-pair left.'

Thither wended their way both man and dog. They found Fineekin within and alone.

'I congratulate you, sir,' said Mr. Scarsdale politely, 'on possessing the best dog in the University. I am sincerely sorry obliged to part with him.'

'D-does he always b-bleed at the mouth?' inquired Mr. Fineekin ruefully.

'Never except when he is out of temper,' was the ready reply. Then, with a brief 'Excuse me, I'm in a hurry,' he dropped him dodgily in the doorway, and by a quick gesture motioning to Muzzler to keep guard thereon, bolted down the staircase, leaving Mr. Fineekin as fairly in prison as the veriest malefactor in gaol.

'Come here, poo' fellow, then; good dog, then!' cried Fineekin.

But no. The trusty soul, not being sufficiently sophisticated to understand the principles of buying and selling, budged not, nor indeed paid the smallest attention to all the blandishments which heaved at his head. The moment, however, that Mr. Fineekin proached him he rose to his feet, and began to display a terrible double row of sharp teeth.

Mr. Fineekin, in terror and despair, called for his scout from the window, but the man somehow would not answer. Then he collapsed into a condition of horror. After about two hours of agony—for, be it remarked, he did not feel quite sure the animal would not attack him—he bethought him of some biscuit in his cupboard. Perhaps the dog might be bribed into gentleness.

Not so. Muzzler smelt the douceur contemptuously, turned over, scratched the doormat into a heap, and then buried the biscuit cleverly.

Mr. Fineekin groaned in spirit when he found that this ruse was fruitless. He felt like the captive knight in the old song. At last the hull-bell rang, and the poor man began to wish the dog at Jericho, for he was exceeding hungry. But, alas, no; he could not escape. He saw from his altitude, three-pair up, the men troop to their food and troop back again. He was proceeding to howl dismally for his scout, but Muzzler, not sanctioning such noise, growled ominously, and he was forced to desist.

It was about half-past eight when, to his great joy, he heard a heavy footstep lumber up his stairs. In a trice the dog began skipping as peacefully as a young lamb, and crooning for joy over the mysterious visitor. It was Mr. Scarsdale.

In the course of the afternoon his father, moved by his son's repentant letter, had arrived in Oxford, bringing with him his cheque-book. Differences had been promptly reconciled on the give-and-take principle. Sire and son had dined sumptuously at The Crozier, and now, with his skin full of champagne and a pocketful of notes, the gay youth came to try and make arrangements for the redemption of his much-loved canine friend.

It was quite dark, for Mr. Fineekin had been fearful lest by moving about in search of matches he might excite the fury of this terrible animal. Nevertheless, in the glare of a ruddy cigar-end, Mr. Scarsdale's features were recognisable.

'Is th-that Mr. Scarsdale?' faltered the poor man.

'Sir to you,' was the gracious reply. 'I came to—'

'O, O,' yelled Mr. Fineekin, 'k-keep that w-wetched bwute off my legs. If there's a th-thing I dwead it's hydwo-phobia.'

Muzzler was in one of his gayest humours, being overjoyed at the return of Mr. Scarsdale; still, though he was shaking Mr. Fineekin's trouser in playful fashion, he had no design of biting.

'What's the row?' coolly observed Mr. Scarsdale. 'I can't see.'

Mr. Fineekin's yells, however, grew shriller and shriller, and it really seemed not unlikely that he would burst a blood-vessel. Mr. Scarsdale, under the circumstances, condescended to call the dog off.

'Wh-what will you take,' gasped ill-starred Mr. Fineekin, 'to wemove that awful beast? I'll p-pay anything in weason if you'll only relieve me from b-being molested and tewwified.'

'I don't understand you,' answered Mr. Scarsdale sharply.

'Can't you light a candle?'

After a search for matches, Mr. Fineekin contrived to display his countenance to his persecutors blanched with fear.

'Now, sir,' said Mr. Scarsdale, 'you have won a dog well worth fifty pounds, and, if I interpret your meaning aright, you find that the animal's character is a trifle too sporting to suit your requirements. Eh?'

'Take him away! Take him to Jewicho!' cried Mr. Finee.
'Th-that's all I ask.'

'Quite so, sir. But that won't fit with my arrangements. I can't afford to have it said that I raffied my dog and then accepted him as a present from the winner. I'll tell you, however, what I will do; you shall name a price, and I'll buy him of you,' and Scarsdale chinked gold persuasively.

Mr. Fineekin's eyes brightened.

'I've been wather fwightened,' he replied, 'and I've lost a guinea. I'll sell the dog for a sovereign and a shilling.'

'Done!' was the cool answer.

It remains only to state that Mr. Fineekin did not invest far in dog's flesh. He gave up exercise, and took to reading voraciously; the results whereof were a first-class and a fellowship. But the strain on his not very strong nerves was such as to produce a strange twitching of the eye, very knowing in its way. He had done now, and was proctor some years ago, when he astonished his undergraduates by the confidential wink wherewith he amerced them. As for Mr. Scarsdale, he went in heavily for Anglican Christianity, and they made him a colonial bishop. It is reported that he has already taught the male black population how to use their fists scientifically, but this, no doubt, is mere scandal. Nevertheless, the fact remains, he *could* puzzle the heaviest wits among them, even though handicapped by his rocket and apropos.

COMPTON READE, M.A.

THE TRADES AND CRAFTS OF SHAKESPEARE

It may be noted of Shakespeare that he does not deal much in his works with the middle classes of his day. He is at home with kings and courtiers, still more at home with the Dame Quicklys, the Doll Tearsheets, and the lower and more ragged sleeve of society; but he rarely places his characters among the reputable burghers, the snug citizens. There is nothing wonderful in this. In no age has this respectable class afforded to the poet or dramatist any sufficient contrasts of light and shade; they are unadapted for his canvas, and he wisely leaves them alone.

Still it may be interesting to trace what Shakespeare says of the traders and craftsmen, his contemporaries. And first we will take the mercer, one Master Dumbleton, who very prudently declines to give credit to that reckless knight Falstaff for the satin for his 'short cloak and slop.' He requires better security than the bond of Sir John and his dependent Bardolph; and the fat knight is naturally indignant, and rails at the 'smooth pates,' who 'wear nothing but high shoes and bunches of keys at their girdles,' and 'stand upon security.' We may here remark, that the 'bond'—a legal instrument binding the parties to it to the payment of a heavy penalty, generally double the principal, as a forfeit on the non-payment of the actual debt—was a favourite security with traders of the time of Shakespeare, and indeed has not long become obsolete, driven out by the more handy promissory note and bill of exchange.

The haberdasher and the tailor are *dramatis personæ* in the *Taming of the Shrew*. The haberdasher shows the cap he has made for Katharina, and departs without more words; but the tailor has more to say. He makes gowns and kirtles, the tailor of those days, as well as doublets and hose, and he is just as glib with his tongue as his modern representative. The tailor has ever been reproached with his insignificance, and Petruchio does not spare the conventional abuse: 'Thou thread, thou thimble, . . . thou flea, thou nit, thou winter-cricket thou!' The yard measure is the emblem of the tailor as the last is of the shoemaker (*Romeo and Juliet*, act i. sc. 2). In one of those charming scenes between Hotspur and his wife that occur in the First Part of *Henry IV.*, the gallant young Percy justifies her when she refuses to sing to the company: 'Tis the next' (nearest) 'way to turn tailor or be redbreast-teacher.' The village tailor is to this day usually the foremost in a carol or a

glee; and this might open to us many curious speculations as to the idiosyncrasies of trade; but we forbear.

From the tailor and shoemaker to the cobbler is no great descent, but Shakespeare marks it with his usual adroitness:

'Cobbler. Truly, sir, all that I live by is with the awl. I meddle with no tradesman's matters, nor woman's matters, but with awl.'

The cobbler, you will observe, is no tradesman, but an artisan, as is the carpenter, who (*Julius Caesar*, act i. sc. 1) is reproved by the tribune Flavius that, being mechanical, he walks 'upon a labouring day without the sign' of his 'profession'; namely, the leather apron and the rule.

One might well conclude, and the bust and portraits of our poet bear out the inference, that Shakespeare meddled not much with razors. No merry Figaro appears in his dramas, and we have few allusions to the barber. We may cite 'the barber's chair that fits' everybody (*All's Well that Ends Well*, act ii. sc. 2), and 'the forfeits in a barber's shop,' that stand 'as much in mock as mark.' These forfeits are the penalties frolicsomenely enforced from customers who meddle with the razors or other implements of the barber that are displayed about his shop. Forby, in his *East Anglian Vocabulary*, says that this exaction of forfeits existed in his day (1830), and we have no doubt the custom might yet be traced in out-of-the-way country districts.

The barber naturally brings us to the surgeon, of whom—and we may take the fact as an indication that Shakespeare had 'a regular medical attendant'—little is said by our dramatist. Portia adjures Shylock to have one present when he exacts the forfeiture of his pound of flesh from Antonio; but the prudent Jew—who had experience of doctors' bills, no doubt—cannot see the necessity of incurring such a charge.*

Although the schoolmaster does not properly come within our scope, we may mention him in this category. We have an excellent sketch of him in one of Shakespeare's earliest comedies, *Love's Labour's Lost*—namely, Holofernes, who educates youth 'at the charge-house on the top of the mountain;' a pompous critical gentleman, who is sadly put out of countenance when he has to perform on his own account. Malvolio (*Twelfth Night*, act iii. sc. 2) cross-gartered 'like a pedant that keeps a school i' th' church.' And this reminds us that, from the time of Henry VII. downwards, the parish church was very frequently the schoolhouse also. John Evelyn, who was born a few years after Shakespeare's death, tells us, in his *Diary*, that he learnt his rudiments from a schoolmaster in the church at Wootton; and the writer was informed by an elder

* The apothecary in *Romeo and Juliet*, who culls simples and sells poison has an Italian aspect, and is not to be ranked among our English bourgeois.

gentleman, living in the parish of Loddon, Norfolk, that he remembered, fifty years ago or so, that a school was carried on in a little chamber over the porch in Loddon church.

The blacksmith, though at that time, as now, he was an artisan of much importance in the village community, meets with little notice from Shakespeare, although the one allusion that we have culled teems with descriptive force :

' I saw a smith stand with his hammer, thus,
The whilst his iron did on the anvil cool,
With open mouth swallowing a tailor's news ;
Who, with his shears and measure in his hand,
Standing on slippers,—which his nimble haste
Had falsely thrust upon contrary feet,—
Told of a many thousand warlike French
That were embattail'd and rank'd in Kent.'

King John, act iv. sc. 2.

But when we come to the publican—the host or hostess, the tavern-keeper, the tapster—we are embarrassed with the multiplicity of our references. The host of Shakespeare's day is rather familiar and presuming : he loves a merry jest, but keeps a careful eye on the credit of his customers. The hostess is fat, jovial, and somewhat obscene ; she is long-suffering with her favourites, but her patience may come to an end at last. She can attack her customers, and hand them over to the keeping of the law, when she thinks her money in danger ; but she is not inexorable nor without bowels of compassion. She watches over the sick-bed of the inimitable Falstaff, and we can pardon her gross and fulsome habits when we picture her as fitly comforting the dying moments of our scandalous old favourite :

' Now I to comfort him bid him a' should not think of God ; I hoped there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet. So a' bade me lay more clothes on his feet. I put my hand into the bed and felt them, and they were as cold as any stone.'

The carrier from Kent, surly and grumbling, with his packhorses picketed in the yard of the inn, whose clock is Charles's Wain rising over the new chimney, is not widely different from your carrier of the present day, who is, however, generally cheerful and obliging. He no longer stands in fear at Gadshill, and has no convoy of gentlemen travelling up to London with great charge to bear him company ; but much of the internal communication of the rural districts is still in his hands, and he is in no immediate danger of being extinguished by railway enterprise.

Of the haberdasher's wife, who has the clubs of the apprentices of the Strand at her command, who wears a pinked porringer on her head, and rails at the palace-porter from among the press at the Princess Elizabeth's christening, we have a glimpse at the end of *King Henry VIII.*, though it may be doubted whether we have

Shakespeare's hand in the delineation. The goldsmith's wife kept more select company, and exchanges wit with the gallants of the court :

' Have you not been acquainted with goldsmiths' wives,' as the melancholy Jaques to Orlando (*As You Like It*, act iii. sc. 1) ' and conned them out of rings ?'

The pedler, or travelling merchant, is well represented by Andelyens, a gay merry rascal, with songs for man or woman, of all sizes. ' He hath ribbons of all the colours i' the rainbow ; points more than all the lawyers in Bohemia can learnedly handle, though they come to him by the gross ; inkles, caddisses, cambrics, lawns : when he sings 'em over, as they were gods or goddesses ; you would think a smock were a she-angel, he so chants to the sleeve-band, and the work about the square on't.' Inkles and caddisses are still known to the small-ware dealers, the one being a sort of braid, the other of tape ; but the names would not be familiar to the housewives of the present day. The points are strings with which the upper and lower garments were attached, an end served by our modern ' braces.' The silken tips of driving-whips are known by the harness-makers as points, and the name is probably a survival.

We do not pretend to have exhausted the list of Shakespeare's craftsmen. Nick Bottom, the lover of Titania, is a weaver ; Francis Flute, a bellows-mender ; Tom Snout, a tinker ; but we find nothing characteristic of these crafts. That even in those days it was possible to play many parts we may infer from the testimony of Christopher Sly (Induction, *Taming of the Shrew*) :

' Am not I Christopher Sly, old Sly's son of Burton-heath ; by birth a pedler, by education a card-maker, by transmutation a bachelor, and now by present profession a tinker ?'

At the same time, his example is not encouraging to those who are dissatisfied with their present lot, and desire a change of occupation. He is in danger of the tharborough, for refusing or being unable to pay his score at the alehouse ; and he owes Marian Hackett, the fat ale-wife of Wincot, ' fourteenpence on the score : sheer ale ;' a debt which the said Marian would take a very sanguine view of, if she classed it as ' doubtful.'

We are disposed to think, however, that Shakespeare is not responsible for Christopher Sly ; for our poet had a sort of tenderness for rogues and vagabonds, and generally mixes some touch of humour with their composition, wanting altogether in Christopher.

Here space compels us to take our leave of Shakespeare's gallery of trading men, hoping that even this household stuff may have its kind of history.

FREDERICK TALBOT.

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Francis Huard, del.

C. M. Jenkin, sc.

APPEAL.

LOVE'S APPEAL

Thou swayest my life, as moons the sea :
Nature's inevitable laws
Less plainly blend effect with cause
Than thou dost rule my destiny.

Thou art my fate : undream'd-of bliss
Is stored for me in one sweet word.
Let but its opposite be heard,
And then thou art my Nemesis.

O pause, and solemn counsel take !
Think what it is to own control
O'er man's whole being, life, and soul ;
To bid a heart beat high—or break !

All other hope, ambition, love,
Centres in that by thee inspired :
Less ardently my soul is fired
With aims that point to worlds above.

So, like a votary at the shrine,
I feel the afflatus o'er me steal
Blindly before thy feet to kneel
And render homage quite divine.

Then speak ; be this appeal my last ;
Only remember that a life
Before thee lies, for peace or strife—
A future thou canst bless or blast.

Speak. I will bend me to thy will,
In silent joy, if thou say ' Yes.'
If ' No,' I'll hide my bitterness
And be thy mute adorer still.

MAURICE DAVIES.

SPORT AND ADVENTURE IN HUDSON'S BAY COUNT

To escape as far as possible from the conventional trammels of modern society; to revert, in some remote quarter of the globe, nearly as may be to the rude conditions of primitive life; to fly at a tangent into the unknown space of the great Western continent or to lose oneself in Libyan deserts, or amid some wilderness of Asiatic hills,—appears to be an instinct with hundreds and tens of true-born Britons living under the complex laws of an artificial nineteenth-century civilisation. Such an attempt is to be regarded as a protest against the well-bred monotony of polite existence; or perhaps it must be taken as a proof that there still survive in our natures those passions which have made the English race what it is. If you scratch a Russian, you know what to expect. If you remove the veneer which covers the nature of the thoroughbred son of Albion, you shall find that he is swayed by much the same aspirations and motives as those which governed his ancestors when the surface of this island was pretty equally divided between forest and fen, hill and wild. The hardy Norseman, we know by lyrical authority, had his home of yore upon the foaming wave; the spirit of the hardy Norseman lives at the present day in the breasts of his descendants to the hundredth generation, animating the body of the Oxford or Cambridge undergraduate each time his oar is pulled through the Thames, and his boat cleaves the river as rapidly as strong arms and stout hearts can impel it, in pursuit of the advance of his triumphant or defeated antagonist. Race is the basis of history, and the earliest and distinctive traits of a race will be its heritage of its members, till the race itself is extirpated. This circumstance would of itself be enough to explain the phenomenon in question. But it is not the only one that might be adduced. In contrast is the intuitive craving of mankind. Bucolical poetry has been at all periods the product of an intensely artificial and avowedly veterately worldly age. The Eclogues of Virgil were written when Rome was saturated to the heart's core with the mammon of avarice and vanity. The Eclogues of Pope were written when just the same influences prevailed in England. The bards of our own day, even on one or two occasions Mr. Tennyson, have not patronised any species of metrical composition. But instead, as a not less emphatic protest against the predominant genius of contemporary life, we have Mr. Swinburne, Mr. Morris, and the crowd of poetasters who follow in their train, imploring us to readopt the traditions of Attic

Roman paganism, and to worship the deities of Olympus at least by following their precepts in the world of London.

It is a healthier development of this vigorous rebellion against the social influences that hem us in on every side, that brood over us from every quarter, which prompts English noblemen and English gentlemen to scour the surface of the terrestrial globe in quest of new scenes, new occupations, new ideas. The precise method in which they seek to realise their vague and restless wishes is determined by the habits and pursuits of the order to which they belong. Trained to field sports from their infancy upward, they announce their presence in regions lying outside the domain of civilisation by the crack of the rifle-bullet, instead of the inspired shriek of the rhymester. If our latter-day poets have succeeded in making for themselves an ideal dwelling in the centre of classic heathenism, these adventurous Nimrods at periodic intervals literally find their habitation in spots untrodden by city-bred humanity. A Livingstone is but the sublime type of these amateur nomads. Motives different from those which urged on the great explorer, who found his rest at Ilala on the 23d May 1873, primarily dominate a Gordon Cumming or a Lord Southesk. But a family likeness runs through every member of the group. Unless we are greatly mistaken, these men confer an inestimable service upon their times. They keep before the minds of a generation overflooded of self-indulgence and luxury at home the picture of a thoroughly masculine ideal. They start forth on their expedition of enterprise; they return, and they give us their experiences in a book. Ill or well written, these literary works have always something to instruct and much to interest. They create the appetite, which, to a certain extent, they satisfy, and thus it is that sporting tours in distant latitudes are as popular and fashionable a species of physical pastime as a moor in the Highlands, a hunting-box in Leicestershire, a river in Norway, and a yacht at Cowes. Wild-boar hunts are organised every week in London for the Black Forest in Germany; and if matters go on at this rate, more gentlemen will annually repair to shoot buffaloes in the prairies than formerly pilgrimaged to kill grouse in Sutherland and Caithness.

Such a volume* as that which Lord Southesk has given us is an admirable commentary on the English tendency of which we have spoken, and one most favourably representative of the class to which it belongs. The complete English gentleman is reflected throughout its pages; and when we say 'complete,' we attach a special meaning to the word. Lord Southesk is something more than a mere sportsman. Fond of his rifle and a capital shot, he combines with the

* *Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains: a Diary and Narrative of Travel, Sport, and Adventure during a Journey through the Hudson's Bay Company's Territories in 1859 and 1860.* By the Earl of Southesk, K.T., F.R.G.S. With maps and illustrations. (Edinburgh: Edmonston & Douglas, 1875.)

instincts of the refined Englishman the accomplishments of the scholar and the perceptions of the man of science. He draws us a series of powerfully-graphic pictures of the mountains that he traversed; the valleys he explored; the big game that he bagged, and the manner in which he bagged it. At the same time, he writes in a tone and spirit which are very welcome, and which are an edifying contrast to the inflated glorification of brute courage and muscular strength into which a narrative of physical enterprise too often resolves itself. By every class of reader *Saskatchewan*—the name of which river we may as well, once and for all, say is pronounced with a strong emphasis on the second syllable, the first, the penultimate, and the ultimate being as short as the human voice can make them—thus, Sās-kāch-ĕ-wān—will be found a delightful book; it is delightful to those who like a plain straightforward account of vigorous vicissitudes by forest and flood; it is delightful to those who take an interest in one of the most promising yet least-known and least-developed portions of the great American continent; it is delightful to all who can appreciate the delicate literary touches of a well-informed, refined English gentleman. Useful to the sportsman and the traveller, it will be a work invaluable to the scientific geographer. Lord Southesk is a man of many interests and many attainments. He can bowl over a buffalo—and an enraged buffalo is a peculiarly awkward antagonist—or he can knock you off a neat bit of Shakespearean *exegesis* with the same happiness and skill. It may be said that the essays appended to the volume on the dramas of the immortal bard are somewhat out of place in a volume on Transatlantic sport. The answer to this is that Lord Southesk was anxious to give us a record of the manner in which he occupied his time from May 1859 to January 1860; that he wanted to show not only how thoroughly an English sportsman could relish the amusements of the Hudson's Bay Company Territory, but how a mind with any resources at its disposal may always be pleasantly occupied in the most outlandish places, and with the fewest possible of literary and intellectual appliances. Lord Southesk not only took his weapons of destruction with him in the shape of a whole arsenal of guns and rifles; he found room for a *Shakespeare*, a *Life of Wesley*, *My Novel*, and about a score more of equally attractive *rade mecum*s.

As to the successive incidents recorded in *Saskatchewan*, Lord Southesk must tell his own story. Little would be gained by boiling-down four hundred pages of vigorous writing into the compass of our present article. Taking as his start-point Crow-Wing, on the Mississippi, his lordship went with his oddly-assorted retinue to Fort Garry. Thence he proceeded due west till he reached the elbow of the Saskatchewan, when he turned off due north to Carlton House. Then he went due westward once more till he reached

Edmonton, and then going gradually southwards he came to Old Bow Fort, which was his final goal. Some hundreds of miles of his homeward route were identical with the line he pursued on his outward-bound journey. From Old Bow Fort he proceeded by a direct cut to Edmonton—traversing, that is, the base of a triangle instead of its two sides. But from Edmonton to Carlton the track was virtually the same. From Carlton he went to the shores of Lake Winnipegosis, skirting the wild Touchwood Hills. Thence he sailed on the superb lake of Manitoba; and when he had arrived at Fort Garry, retraced his former footsteps till he found himself once more at Crow-Wing. It was comparatively an accident which caused Lord Southesk to select the Hudson's Bay Territory as the scene of his explorations. In 1858 he wanted good sport 'in some part of the world or other,' where 'at the same time he could recruit his health by an active open-air life in a healthy climate.' 'Why not go to Hudson's Bay Country?' was the question casually asked him by some friend. 'It is full of large game, such as buffalo, bears, and deer; the climate is exactly what you require.' The offer of an introduction to the governor of the Company, Sir George Simpson, was no sooner made than it was accepted; and on the 15th April 1859 Lord Southesk found himself fairly started on his travels. During the first stage of his route on the American continent, Lord Southesk had for his fellow-traveller Dr. Rae, the great Arctic explorer. On the 14th June Lord Southesk was at Fort Garry, and on that day all his preparations were complete. 'I was fortunate,' he writes, 'in securing the services of a thoroughly competent guide—that is to say, head man—in John McKay, a younger brother of an energetic leader from Crow-Wing. Under him were four men, belonging to his own district: Morrison McBeath and Donald Matheson of unmixed Sutherlandshire descent; George Kline of the French-Canadian race; and James Short, whom I have already spoken of—all of them picked men, perfectly up to their work, excellent fellows in every possible respect. Besides this Red-River party there was Duncan Robertson, who came with me from Scotland; also Sir George's canoe man, Thomas Ariwakenna, the Iroquois, commonly known as Toma, whose duties consisted in driving the wagon, cooking my meals, and, along with Duncan, acting as my special attendant.'

It is with much reluctance that we abstain from introducing the reader to even the chief of the countless exciting episodes in *Saskatchewan*. We can only sum up results. The game which Lord Southesk found exactly verified the expectations which his friend had led him to form—there were bears, buffaloes, wild sheep, and some small winged animals. The climate was delicious, nor from the beginning to the end of the campaign does any one seem to have had a day's illness. Bugs and mosquitoes annoyed during the sum-

mer months, but there was nothing more serious. The cold in the early winter months was excessive; and we can quite sympathise with Lord Southesk when he tells us that one bitter February day, in 1860, he was profoundly grateful to find himself back in the comfortable coffee-room of the Brevoort-House Hotel. As to the character of the native Indians, our author seems to have formed the lowest possible opinion of them. They are mostly thieves and drunkards, and are all of them liars and knaves. 'As I sat,' he writes, 'in the bar-room (at Crow-Wing), I beheld a sight that filled me with sorrow and disgust—the once great chief of the Ojibways, "Hole-in-the Day," reeling about in a state of contemptible drunkenness. This degraded man was following Larnoe everywhere, with the most abject importunities for drink. "Charlie, Charlie, do give me more!" was his piteous incessant cry, while tears ran down his pale and flabby cheeks. At length, in an agony of supplication, he caught hold of Larnoe's coat-skirt; the tavern-keeper spurned him away, and he fell on his face upon the floor with helpless blubberings like a scolded child.'

As will be seen, fifteen years have gone since *Saskatchewan*—'the river that runs so swiftly'—was written, or at least the journals which are incorporated into it were kept. It seems natural to ask whether the lapse of this interval of time may not in some degree impair the value of the book, so far as the practical traveller or sportsman is concerned. Strange as it may seem, it does nothing of the kind. Except in the immediate neighbourhood of Fort Garry, a decade and a half has worked no change in the appearance or conditions of the country. Lord Southesk's information is therefore as fresh for all practical purposes as if it had been collected yesterday. It so happens that we have before us at this minute a letter from one of the chief officials of the Hudson Bay Company testifying to this fact. For the public at large evidence of this nature may be unattainable; but as we have been at the pains of comparing Lord Southesk's volume with Grant's *Ocean to Ocean*, published in 1873, we feel able to speak with something like decisiveness on the matter.

There is one more subject to which we think it desirable to draw attention. Lord Southesk has been informed by one of his reviewers that, 'if he is to be accepted as a fair representative of his class,' it would seem that 'no amount of culture will eradicate the savage instincts of the British gentleman.' While we deprecate the habit of criticising criticism in a general way, the charge here formulated against the author of *Saskatchewan* is so personal, so gross, so unfounded, that we cannot but animadvert to its terms. We search in vain for the slightest pretext for such an insinuation. The reviewer in question cites one or two extracts from Lord Southesk's diary, in which he gives the particulars of some especially difficult shots that he made

at long distances and under dangerous circumstances. Upon this his censor gratuitously gives his lordship, when he expresses his indignation at the cruel treatment accorded to their teams by Canadian dog-drivers, to understand that he is a hypocrite, and that he is something worse than a hypocrite when he expresses his gratitude to divine Providence for deliverance from imminent peril. What Lord Southesk's real views on the subject of sport are, and what were the occasions on which he made use of his deadly arms of precision, may be judged from the following paragraph, which the reviewer of course ignores, in common with many other passages similar in tone and scope: 'I was well pleased,' he writes, 'with our sport among the buffalo, which to my mind could scarcely have been improved. Had slaughter been the chief object we might have slain hundreds of bulls and lean cows; nothing could have been more easily done; but such cruelty would have weighed heavy on my conscience, and to give my men justice, they showed no inclination for mere wanton massacre. Not counting two or three bulls shot after a fine run and allowed every chance for their lives, or slain under some sudden excitement, I could safely say that no buffalo had been killed by myself and my men except for good, or at all events definite, and sufficient reasons.'

It is true that Lord Southesk went to the country of the Saskatchewan as a sportsman; but he also went there as a pilgrim in quest of health. He would be the last person to deny that he took a genuine and a sportsmanlike pleasure in routing out the *feræ nature* which he encountered from their lairs. But he was attended by a large party; he was travelling through a country uncivilised and almost uninhabited. His commissariat was purely contingent on the success of his rifle. It was absolutely necessary that he should kill a certain number of game, and when that number was completed he killed no more. To what straits he was sometimes brought in the matter of food may be judged of from the fact that on several occasions he had to make his meal off the hind leg of a skunk! The charges brought against him by the reviewer to whom we have alluded are as insignificant as they are malicious. Judged of by such a standard, writers like Stonehenge, the Druid, and Nimrod would be absolute savages; sportsmen generally, bloodthirsty demons; and all who record the incidents of sport, nothing better than ghouls and vampires. It is the essential humanity of Lord Southesk's book which constitutes one of its special charms—a humanity as conspicuous as its culture and refinement, and as thoroughly natural as the fresh spirit of vigorous vitality which every page seems to exhale. *Saskatchewan* is a book that sportsmen will delight in, and it is a book which will please in not an inferior degree every reader who can appreciate the superb scenery of the rivers, rocks, and forests of the Hudson Bay Country, either at first hand, or seen through the medium of vividly picturesque description.

WITHIN SOUND OF BOW BELLS

WERE you born where, supposing you had been master enough of yourself to listen, you could have heard the chiming at St. Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside, E.C.? Then are you, by glorious tradition, you are aware, entitled to the high style and dignity of Cockney and then have you so many thousands of big brothers and sisters and less near relatives—big by growth, at any rate, if not all of them by possession of gallant heart and mind—that you have no need to blush and stammer, and to strive to blur out the fact of your connativity. But have you ever (on subsequent and more serious and reliable occasions), *after* hearing the chiming at the church of St. Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside, E.C., formed one of the congregation at morning week-day service there? Ah, *that* is a very different matter, and that is a question to which very few, Londoners or provincials either, could make an answer in the affirmative. And on that matter there are, curiously, a few words to say.

Are the following sentences in kind readers' memory? 'A great sea-fight was expected; but . . . in effect no fight proved needful. Daylight was not yet sunk, when there rose from the north-eastward a heavy gale; blew all night, and by six next morning was a raging storm; had blown——quite away out of those waters (fractions of him upon the rocks of Guernsey); had tumbled—— transports bottom uppermost (so to speak) in Dunkirk Roads; and, in fact, had blown the Enterprise over the horizon, and relieved the official Britannic mind in the usual miraculous manner.'

Are these sentences of Carlyle's in memory? it is demanded. If they are not, there they are, for relishing consideration, and for the object of being able to ask to what do they refer? Is it to the Spanish Armada? Not so; because the blanks should read *Rocquetaille* and the *Comte de Saxe*; Guernsey and Dunkirk are somewhat out of longitude; and, if a glance be given to the top of Carlyle's page, the date can be read March 6th, 1744; a century and three quarters lagging! And yet surely the words 'raging storm,' 'blown the Enterprise over the horizon,' 'miraculous manner &c., do describe the great naval event of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, as we in our hearts ever have enshrined it! Yes; for the reason that history is the garrulous old dame she is; perpetually uttering the same stories; constantly, if asked for a picture of what is doing in one group of centuries, holding up to view a mirror of some other that has preceded. However, let it be. One overth

WITHIN SOUND OF BOW BELLS

is thoroughly efficacious in recalling another, and this *does* recall the defeat of the invincible Spanish Armada, and that is precisely what the quotation was required to do.

Of course it will be asked wonderingly, Why? Of course, too, it will be thought conclusively there *can* be no connection between King Philip's half-moon of gaudy galleons and the gray old church of St. Mary-le-Bow. But there is, though. On the 12th day of August of each year there is held in that traffic-beridden building a special service of thanksgiving for the glorious upset of these very galleons, and the discomfiture of the dreaded monarch who ordered them to these shores. It was held this year; it was held last year; it has been held every year that there have been three persons gathered together to listen to it. There was an intermission, of course, in the seven years between the burning of the original church in 1666 and the completion of the present structure by Sir Christopher Wren in 1673—though this is shorter than it might have been, owing to the fire having broken out on September 3d, three weeks after the celebration of that year's thanksgiving; but with this exception (and even then, for sure, the piety of the incumbent and the necessities of the people would have found some temporary locus whence they could have sent up their fervent prayers), and with the exception also of the one or two occasions when the bells have clanged out to unheeding ears or to busy citizens too anxious and too eager to be drawn from mart or change, the singular old service has gone on, and the custom has continued to be honoured by the—observance. One year that shall be noted the congregation amounted to ten persons, of whom one only was of Adam's gender. Four officers of the church completed the souls within its walls; the rev. the officiating minister, the clerk, the sexton, and lastly, the neat and orderly young woman who undoubtedly does her duty both to the handing to and the proper cleansing of the pews. The service (the ordinary Order of Common Prayer) was faithfully gone through, without organ voluntary to precede it, or choir chanting, or anthem, to relieve the clergyman, by rest or substitution, of a little of his fatigue; the Old Hundredth Psalm-tune was sung (the clerk primitively leading off the strain; the nine ladies present—were they the 'tuneful' *incognite*?—helping him with sufficiently melodious treble); and then, properly, according to the rubric, there followed the homily or sermon. In this there was allusion made to the overthrow of the invincible Spanish Armada, and after it there came the benediction, the slow uprising of the ten worshippers, the quiet withdrawal of them, the closing of the doors, and the thing was done.

This in the year, say, 1870. But how in 1770? How in 1670? How in 15—not 70 (for the Armada then had had no existence, the Spanish king having only in that year, it may be presumed, given

up the hope of becoming the consort of Elizabeth, since it was precisely in that year the Pope struck at her most despotic majesty with his extreme blow of excommunication), but how was it in 1590, two years after the humiliation of King Philip, and when yet the keels and spars and treasure of his galleons were being tossed from rock to wave on the wild and cutting shores of Ireland and the Orkneys?

Let the centuries be taken in succession, and taken backwards, as all centuries should be, if it is required to grasp them with the easiest comprehension. Think of 1770. What figures were likely to be wending towards Bow-churchyard, summoned by the chiming, thinking of the invincible Spanish Armada—then? First and foremost, as is fitting, there would have been his reverence the rector; shovel-hat, wig, bands, breeches, buckles, powder, serene smile, and (sure to be) snuff-box, complete. And, pray, who was his reverence the rector? Thomas Newton, D.D., Bishop of Bristol; a man of liberal thought, and who, beyond all question, was very liberally benefited. He was made, during his life, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge; Rector of this St. Mary; Prebendary of Westminster (where he had been a scholar); Precentor of York; Canon residentiary of St. Paul's; then Bishop of Bristol; and, finally, Dean of St. Paul's. He made himself also critic of the great critic, Dr. Johnson, whose fellow-townsmen and contemporary he was; and old Samuel said something of him too richly-tasting to be here omitted. He was at Oxford, his busy Bozzy with him (in the year 1784). They had gone down thither by coach, in company with those agreeable American ladies who were meddlesomely cautioned *on no account* to let drop any allusion to their own congress, because the old doctor was well known to be so very violent against their people; and the pair had taken up their quarters at the house of Dr. Adams, the Master of Pembroke College there, Johnson's very kind and hospitable old friend. The host commenced speaking of the St. Mary-le-Bow bishop; he had been then about two years laid in St. Paul's Cathedral, and his *Life*, from his own pen, had just appeared as a prefix to his collected works. It was in this *Life* that he had censured the never-to-be-censured Johnson; writing bitterly of his malevolence, his spleen, his ill-humour, his revival of old scandals, his—other things that rankled in the big Samuel's mind when his name was mentioned in his hearing; and the old lexicographer shouldered his gun, took aim, and heavily fired. His first shot brought down the honoured bishop to a very so-so mortal indeed. His name being Thomas, he called him Tom. 'Tom,' he said, 'knew he should be dead before what he has said of me should appear. He durst not have printed it while he was alive.' Dr. Adams, the host, adroitly tried to give the subject a gentle turn. 'Was not the Prophecies of the bishop thought to be his great work?' he

asked. 'Why, sir, it is Tom's great work,' Johnson fired out again, this time a very broadside of satire; 'but how far it is great, or how much of it is Tom's, are other questions. I fancy a considerable part of it was borrowed. And,' he added, when his host opposed that new front to him, 'I don't think he was a very successful man either. He did not get very high; he was late in getting what he did get, and he did not get it by the best means. I believe he was a gross flatterer.'

A monument to this bishop-rector is in this his church of St. Mary-le-Bow, at his own altar's side. It looks on, pale and calm enough, in these days now. But the question is, how was Spanish-Armada day kept when he was there, or should have been there, in his own proper flesh? To this no doubt the answer is, it was done in all form and solemnity. Patched faces and powdered hair would have been present in fair numbers—with painted fans to stir the heat upon them, with rattles and hoops and brocaded trains to make the city beaux raise their eyebrows gladly. The said beaux, and, too, graver and more paunchy cits—members all of them of the Honourable Companies of Skinners, Cordwainers, Haberdashers, and so forth—would have found inside the church staunch Puritanism; no innovations. They could have sat looking at the lovely wearers of the hoops and trains calmly, free from draught; for already the screen, still standing, had been crected, to narrow Sir Christopher's proportions by nearly half, and make warmth and comfort (and perhaps somnolency?) things possible to the parish-imers; and through this screen, when its wicket was opened on this August day of 1770, to admit any tardy comer, there would have floated lazily the nasal singing of one of Sternhold and Hopkins's Psalms. This, let it be supposed, to have agreeable identifying; 'his Sternhold's own, and numbered forty-four:

' Our ears have heard our fathers tell,
and rev'rently record
The wondrous works that thou hast done
in ancient time, O Lord.

I trusted not in bow or sword,
they could not save me sound:
Thou keep'st us from our foes' great rage,
and did'st them all confound.'

This with a pitch-pipe possibly—or shall there be conceded a bass-viol, flute, or fiddle?—or this, perhaps, even with the boom and tender lingering of a fine-toned organ, would have been what the congregation in that year would have listened to, and then they would have composedly dispersed and betaken themselves away.

Now let a move be made back one century again. Let the memory rest on 1670, four years after the great fire. What was St. Mary-le-Bow then? A heap of ashes. A heap of blistered

timbers, of crumbling brick, of ruined carving, of melted ornament of waste and dust and other *débris*, with scarcely a hod-load of salvage anywhere; and with 13,000 houses in 400 streets (not vast long streets certainly, since division gives only thirty-seven houses and a fraction to each one of them) all lying in the same ruin and confusion, a shroud of wail and horror wrapping the whole scene in. In a black heap, thus; or, if the rate were rapid at which boards and public works moved then, St. Mary-le-Bow might then have been a pile of lofty scaffolding, with hoarding, mortar-heaps, and ladders with workmen hammering and hoisting who had seen Cromwell perhaps, at Whitehall; who had roared a British shout at Charles II. riding into town restored; who would have had only confused notions in their head of the Spanish Armada (sundry Ironsides matchlock-snapping, and plague-outbreakings, standing to them a pretty tough personal 'history' to blot it out); but who would be sure to have had whistles that wanted wetting often out of a 'three hooped pot' full of some convenient King's Head strong ale. Who would have been overlooking them—Dr. Wren, F.R.S., as he only was then, Surveyor-General of Public Works, as his office these two last busy years had made him—and the workmen would have seen him a limber energetic man under forty (a gentleman and a scholar withal, with his father a dean and his uncle a bishop, and he himself twice chosen to sit in Parliament), and the workmen would have found him anxious after his Italian-Gothic spire, 197 feet high, and then a novelty; anxious, too, for all his measurements and details to be executed fitly, and for the money intrusted to him for the purpose, 8071*l.* 1*s.* 1*d.*, to be conscientiously well spent. There was a Dame Dyonis Williamson, too, of Hales Hall, in the county of Norfolk, who could not watch these workmen hoisting up the new church of St. Mary-le-Bow and sit by watching, quite unmoved. She felt for her leathern purse in her capacious pocket and gave (as a tablet is still recording) 'two thousand pounds towards the Rebuilding and Splendid finishing this Church and Steeple and Furnishing the same with Bells, &c., which was Demolished by the late Dreadfull Fire, Anno 1666.' A George Smallwood was the rector then, and George Smallwood was made trustee of the generous dame's money, with seven churchwardens to help him; and no doubt he was holding his Spanish-Armada service somewhere on this 12th of August, if only in some lath-built building run up on the near waste ground just for the time. For the Reformed Church was strong and bitter then against the religion of hated Rome. It was declared openly that this fire, that had unchurched this rector and many others, was Papists' work; it was declared so openly, that a committee of inquiry sat in Parliament to sift the evidence (only to decide finally, as it is easy now to understand, that there was no atom of evidence at all). So, would not the Armada service have had

its temporary holding in 1670, and George Smallwood, rector, have had more than usual matter for the sermon he was called upon to preach? Surely. In it he could have quoted high opinions against the wretched religion his hearers had been saved from. He could have reminded them of Chief-Justice Coke, who told Mistress Turner at the Somerset state trial that she had committed one of the seven deadly sins by being a Papist; he could have reminded them of Mr. Attorney-General Bacon (afterwards to be more philosophic under a higher style), who did not forget to assure the same poor woman, at the same trial, that poisoning was a Popish trick; he could have reminded them of King Jamie, who at his first entry into England out of Scotland released all the prisoners confined at New-castle (his first great halt), excepting only those who were guilty of treason, murder, and *professing Papistry*; and he could have looked brightly up to his hearers with the hope that, when three years were over, he could celebrate this most momentous thanksgiving-day once more in his own thorough, new-built, right church. Perhaps he did. The records that are handy do not say; and it is of too little matter to disturb dust and cobwebs and cabuly-nibbling moths, and so make out the fact specifically sure. But the records that *are* handy make known this: that St. Mary-le-Bow, with all its splendid finishing (and before the screen was there, too, to nearly halve it), was the scene of a grand ceremony so near to '70 as 1691, the 31st of May. Tillotson was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury within its walls then; an occasion on which no less than six prelates were present (a thick gathering when travelling was labour, and shires' breadths really kept folks apart), and when a large number of the nobility betook themselves that much eastward to do the prelate special honour. He had attended Lord Russell previous to his execution eight years before; that may have been one reason why he was surrounded by so many sympathising friends. (Could the sad Lady Rachel herself have been one of them? Poor noble soul, she lived all the way on to 1723, having been sixteen years her unfortunate husband's wife, and forty years his widow!) At any rate, Archbishop Tillotson went from St. Mary-le-Bow to his palace at Lambeth, to enter for the first time the reverend master there; and with this picture to dwell on, the notice of the building in the seventeenth century ends. It may be mentioned, however, that the rectorship falling vacant within a year of this consecration, the new archbishop gave it to Samuel Bradford, chaplain to King William and Queen Anne, afterwards Bishop of Carlisle, and, by translation, Bishop of Rochester.

And now the turn has come in this camera (it is hoped, *lucida*) of the time when her most strong-tongued majesty Queen Elizabeth was on the throne. She enters the scene finely explosive. 'I swear unto you by God,' she cries, 'that if I knew those per-

sons upon the sea-coast who forsook their towers when King Philip attempted this invasion, who fled up higher into the country, and left all naked and exposed to his entrance, or if I know of any who shall do so hereafter, I will make them feel what it is to be fearful in so urgent a cause!' And with such a spirit as this at the head of affairs (think of the royal owner of it on a white charger at Tilbury, with a truncheon in her hand, breathing out valour and fierce energy to her soldiers!), what would have been the temper of the parishioners of St. Mary-le-Bow when, in 1590, they assembled together to utter their glowing thanks there? But, first, what was the building St. Mary-le-Bow in that year itself? Harrison says (died 1593): 'The greatest part of our building in the cities and good towns of England consisteth only of timber, cast over with thick clay to keep out the wind. . . . The clay with which our houses are commonly impanelled is either white, red, or blue.' Holinshed says (died 1582): 'In times past men were contented to dwell in houses builded of sawn, willow, &c.; so that the use of the oak was in a manner dedicated wholly unto churches, religious houses, princes' palaces, navigation, &c.; but now sawn, &c., are rejected and nothing but oak anywhere regarded.' ('And yet see the change' bewails old Raphael Holinshed, in such a way it *must* be put in here as parenthesis. 'For when our houses were builded of willow, they had we oaken men; but now that our houses are come to be made of oak, our men are not only become willow, but a great many altogether of straw.') Now, taking the facts recorded by both these writers, will imagination picture St. Mary-le-Bow, not as a building all sticks and dirt, as the Spaniards scornfully said, but as an oaken timber church, the beams and joists and sommers painted sober black (like a certain residence at Stratford), the interstices thereof presenting a full sky-colour? To help which there must be an addition of a bow or an arch (over against the church will do, it need not belong to it; it crossed Cheapside, possibly, for city-closing or toll-taking); such arch to possess certain noble or otherwise distinguished proportions, from which the surname Bow has through all these centuries reached us. Of the form and moulding of the timber, and of the colour of the 'impanelling,' there can be here unluckily, no certainty: it is all mere mind-work, induction; but that there was a bow there is no doubt whatever. A seal of the old church is still in existence, bearing the inscription, 'Sigillum ecclesie beat. Marise de Arcubus Londini 1580,' and this settles it. 'Ymaun go thrupp the stone-bow' was the direction given by a poor and pure fen-woman in Lincoln city the other day, when the road to be taken was under one of the glorious old archways; and from the seal's *de Arcubus* it is clear there must be conjured up some bow or arch, if we would think of St. Mary's when Shakespeare could have looked upon it, when Falstaff lost his voice with hallooing

and singing of anthems, when Hotspur railed at his Lady Percy because she spoke with such sarcenet surety he thought she could never have walked farther than Finsbury. To this should there be added a heavy bell, at due times and seasons clanging out or thundering out, 'I do not know; I do not know'? Maybe. There must have been something notable in Bow bells, since they have rung themselves into two dwelling-places in the national sing-song; something that was neither tingling 'Five shillings' like St. Helen's, or striking 'Pay me' like Old Bailey; and with this certainty, and the woodwork and the coloured clay (or plaster), the outward semblance of the Elizabethan St. Mary must cease. For the interior church, as arranged for its sixteenth-century worshippers, it must have been a strange medley. By an Act passed in the first of the queen's highness (because it had been unpassed by Mary, after a previous passing by the late sovereign lord King Edward VI.), all and singular ministers in any cathedral or parish church within this realm of England, Wales, and the marches of the same, were bound to use the new Book of Common Prayer, its mattens, evensong, litany, and so on. Now did the 1590 incumbent of St. Mary's conform to these stringent laws to obtain uniformity, or was he one—in that first breath breathed of free spiritual air—to burst from the bonds that had so tightly bound him, and have no binding save that of his own loosed soul? Did it chance even that he was one compelled, contrary possibly to his own conscience, but by the open threatening of some 'advanced' or blustering parishioner, to have said or sung something on that very 12th of August not down in the parliamentary arrangements? Who can tell? Speakers and listeners both were somewhat hard to manage in those alert and wrestling and inflexible days; even the queen's highness herself had open raps given to her (and rapped others, too, pretty hardly) for departures from the full intent and meaning of her own enactment. One Doring told her to her face, from the pulpit, that she was like an untamed heifer that would not be ruled by God's people, but obstructed His discipline; and she, when Nowell, one of her chaplains, in a sermon preached before her, had spoken with too little reverence (to her mind) of the sign of the cross, called aloud to him from her closet-window, commanding him to retire from that ungodly digression, and to return unto his text. So with all these history-bits to form an opinion upon, is it not evident that the Spanish-Armada service (or any other) at Sancta Mariæ de Arcubus must have been a medley, and the incumbent of Sancta Mariæ a gentleman with a perilous and difficult role? Should he read the *Venite exultemus*, for instance, in Latin? Latin had been chanted within those walls since first the oaken timber had been strained and nailed there, since first the fumes of incense had mounted with the echo of the words to the open roofing. Moreover, the older

WITHIN SOUND OF BOW BELLS

portion of the sitters would be used to the foreign sentences, and might be soothed with clinging that much to the form of their fathers, and by the thought that they were thus not straying too far away. But Elizabeth's Act was most unyielding about *any* rite, ceremony, order, form, or manner, except those in the Authorised Prayer. And Latin was *not* in the Authorised Prayer (Roger Ascham telling, to the shame of the young gentlemen of England, that the queen's majesty herself, here now at Windsor, readeth more Greek every day than some prebendary of this church doth Latin in a whole week); so to keep within the law there must be none of *that*. Should the reverend gentleman wear surplice then, and corner-cap and tippet; confirm a child; use the ring at marriage; bow at the name of Jesus? If he did, the most Protestant of his flock would never worship with him, and he would stand a chance of being reviled and spat at as he walked down his own Cheapside. What, then, if he refused to assume the robes called *cymarre* and *rochette*? (As Hooper did till he had been confined to Cranmer's house, imprisoned; and the king's young majesty had entreated his superiors to let him have his will, and they came to a condescending compromise.) In that case, the Popish associations lingering with a great portion of his reverence's sheep and lambs would make them think he was an open Puritan, and doing wickedly too much to strain the Reformation aside. Had the altar even of St. Mary's at that date been dragged from the wall to the middle of the church? Were the crucifixes down; the piscine levelled; the sedilæ shorn or, mayhap, carried forcibly away? All these details, with many others to bear them company, must remain indeterminate.

The Elizabethan rector of Sancta Mariæ, though, was quite sure of the spirit of his congregation with regard to the one point of thanksgiving for the defeat of the Armada. There was little swerving or hesitation there. Trampling down the matter of religion, there came riding furiously nationality, and it knitted the people together in one strong band. The Spaniard, what was he? A foreigner; and as a foreigner, all glory to Heaven that he had been resisted and conquered stubbornly. Shakespeare knew entirely the spirit of London citizens (and Midland ditto, for that matter) when he was planning *King Henry VI.*, and writing the speech of Lord Clifford to the mob surrounding Cade. Suppose, asks Clifford,

‘The fearful French, whom you late vanquish'd,
Should make a start o'er seas, and vanquish you?
Methinks, already, in this civil broil,
I see them lording it in London streets,
Crying, *Villagers!* unto all they meet.
Better ten thousand base-born Cades miscarry
Than you should stoop unto a Frenchman's mercy.’

And this feeling was precisely the feeling animating English bosoms when Effingham and Drake commanded the English navy; precisely that that would have led Elizabeth's subjects to applaud Clifford uproariously, if by chance he had spoken to them in Armada-time from the boards of the Globe Theatre; precisely that that would have led them certainly to flock to St. Mary-le-Bow abundantly (as they had done at St. Paul's at the first thanksgiving), when the day came round for recalling from what they had been saved. For did not they know the thoughts foreigners had of them,—till the few wrecked Spaniards steered their way home again, and from their reports, combined with sundry other things, there came an alteration in continental opinion? Ay. Shakespeare makes Alençon boast before Orleans that he will soon starve out the English, because

'They want their porridge and their fat bull-beeves;
Either they must be dieted like mules,
And have their provender tied to their mouths,
Or piteous they will look like drown'd mice.'

And the Dauphin, in *Henry V.*, thinks they can be conquered so easily, he throws out the prophecy: 'I will trot to-morrow a mile, and my way shall be paved with English faces.' Ah, well, is it so? is the question in English hearts. The foreigner shall be shown; and when he *has* been shown, and it is clear that it is *not* so, the 1590 rector of St. Mary-le-Bow gathers a congregation round him, and, religious differences flung aside, the old timber and 'impanelled' building shows a mass of uncovered heads, and, as the rector leads, marks the air is stirred with the reverberation of earnest and solemn prayer.

The expenses of this Armada thanksgiving are defrayed out of the interest of a sum of money bequeathed by one Chapman—a zealous, earnest Protestant, if nothing else—who wished for four special anniversary services to be held in the church of St. Mary-le-Bow for ever. As it chanced, these are the only week-day morning services taking place there now throughout the year; and they are St. James's-day (in honour, no doubt, of his anti-papal Scotch majesty), this Armadian 12th of August, the 5th of November (for the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot), and the 19th of November (for the blessed fact of Queen Elizabeth's accession). Poor inflamed and excellent-hearted Chapman! The times he lived in made him full of armaments and forts, and spies and persecutions; full of tortures and bloody massacres and conspiracy. To him these were the peculiar property of Popery; and he shuddered as he thought (for a few items) of King Philip's galleons and galleasses and galleys, numbering a hundred and eighty-one ships in all, and as he was told of the hundreds and hundreds of pieces of cannon in them, and the soldiers and the mariners to work them, and the two thousand odd galley-slaves to move the oars. 'The winds,' Camden said, 'were,

as it were, tired with carrying, the ocean was groaning under the weight.' And did not the firmly-protesting Chapman feel the full weight of this to the very marrow of his bones? Did he not know (for all the world knew, since Philip had had the account printed in Latin, and the modern European languages, except English, in other languages), that the gigantic effort he was making might be held by one and all at its own huge value), did not the protesting Chapman know that on board the galleons were a hundred and eighty monks, who were to land with the successful soldiery, and begin to proselytise and to the rack at the first moment England had collapsed? To be sure. And the good Chapman became like the ocean himself as he thought of this, and groaned bitterly. He had sweet solace, though. The London citizens—trusty and loving subjects of her highness—furnished out twice the number of fighting ships she asked for, and it was good to think of these and the rest of the fleet as they were ready to sail away. Among them there went bearing down the proudly the *Triumph*, the *Elizabeth* (God bless her!), the *White Bear*, the *Victory*, the *Prinrose*, the *Mary Rose*, the *Hope*, the *Bonaventure*; there was also, as interesting index of its building time, but sounding queerly at that day and hour, the *Philip and Mary*; there was (O, pretty and plaintive thoroughly, and chieftainly able to the sensitive memory!) the *Bark of Bullen*; and there followed the *Lyon*, the *Dreadnought*, the *Swiftsure*, the *Antelope*, the *Jennet*, the *Aibates*, the *Handmaid*, the *Foresight*, the *Aid*, the *Bull*, the *Tyger*, the *Falcon*, and finally the *George*. If they were successful—and there were to help them merchantmen, and barks, and ships of forty tons, and fishermen, and pinnaces, and a hundred of hoys; and the whole fleet carried arquebuses, and pikes, and bills, and corslets, and sheaves of arrows, far too many to reckon up their number—if they were successful, what joy to Chapman and to England then! And what deafening cries, 'Ay, agreeing to Elizabeth's proposal to grant a pardon and a pension to Captain Flemming, the Scotch pirate, who was the first to meet the Spanish fleet and give Effingham saving tidings of its gunnery! There can be nothing fit to follow the lively acclamations except, still more vigorously and vivaciously, 'Vivat Regina! save the Queen!'

At which we retire, bowing.

JENNETT HUMPHREYS

CHARLES KINGSLEY

UNDER the shadow of a giant fir-tree in the churchyard of the village which he loved so well, and which, during a period of close on forty years, he served with such faithful energy, Charles Kingsley was buried within a week of his death, on the twenty-first of January last. To Eversley he was as profoundly attached as was ever George Herbert's ideal priest to his imaginary cure. It had been the scene of his happiest labours, the abode of his happiest years. He had long said, that whatever preferment or promotion might be offered him he would accept nothing which would involve the severance of his connection with his Hampshire parish—and possibly Kingsley had looked for at least the tender of some ecclesiastical appointment which was never made; it would have added one more pang to his death-bed if he had felt that he was breathing his last elsewhere than upon the soil of his home. Chartist Parson, author of *Westward Ho!* Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, Canon of Chester and Westminster, Kingsley was known from first to last, through evil report and good report, as Rector of Eversley. American visitors had already begun to 'pilgrimage' the village, and to 'interview' the clergyman. It lay conveniently on the line of route to and from Farringford, the Laureate's residence in the Isle of Wight, and not a few Transatlantic votaries were able to boast on their return to their native land, that though they had failed to 'do' Mr. Tennyson they had succeeded in 'doing' Mr. Kingsley. What Rydal was to Wordsworth, Keswick to Southey, Stowey to Coleridge, in a sense Abbotsford to Scott, and Knebworth to Bulwer, Eversley will long be held as being to Kingsley. It is not merely that the name of the writer will continue to be identified with the spot. Between the genius of the place and the genius of the author there are a curiously close resemblance and sympathy. The interior of his home on the Tweed did not more plainly show the picturesque characteristics of the great novelist of Scotch feudalism than did the rectory and the village of Eversley, with its peculiarities of landscape, its essentially English surroundings, its wide stretches of purple moorland, its chalkstone hills, its running streams, seem to illustrate many a well-remembered episode and aspect in Kingsley's sketches, whether prose or rhyme. His absences from Eversley, save those of vacation and health, were caused only by the duties of his canonry or his professorship. Of these latter, neither added to his reputation. He would have been as well known as a preacher from his published volumes of village sermons if he had never ap-

peared in the pulpit of Chester or Westminster; he detracted from, rather than added to, his reputation as a historian by his lectures at Cambridge. Kingsley's sympathies with the history of the past were intensely broad, and they were intensely human. To him the annals of Europe were the evolution of the successive acts in a great drama, whose burden was the hopes, the fears, the aspirations, the achievements of the best, the strongest, and wisest of mankind. Never was writer less qualified by nature or by study to absorb humanity into a formula, and to see in the progress of events nothing more than the development of scientific principles. A professor of history must needs be also a philosophic critic of history. This is what Kingsley was not; and when he attempted the rôle at Cambridge he naturally failed. He could breathe the breath of life into men and women of the past, whether at learned Alexandria or in Elizabethan England; he could make the dead bones live again, and is, as a historical novelist, in *Westward Ho!* scarcely inferior to Scott in *Ivanhoe*; but when he attempted to grapple with the ethnological questions which underlie history, and to enter the lists against such authorities as Mr. E. A. Freeman, it was clear that he had made a blunder in accepting, even in deference to the wish of the Prince Consort, his Cambridge Professorship. It was to the credit of that august personage that he should have desired for his eldest son during his stay upon the Cam as much as possible of the immediately present influence of a teacher at once so wholesome and exhilarating as Kingsley; but it is to be regretted that this influence could only be obtained at so high a cost.

One other blunder, and only one, of first-rate magnitude, Charles Kingsley committed; and that blunder was directly caused by the spirit which animates the best of his writings, notably his story of Amyas Leigh. Like his friend and connection by marriage, Mr. J. A. Froude, Kingsley was an enthusiastic Protestant. He believed that all the virtues of which English natures are capable were to be found incarnate in the race of men who were contemporary with the defeat of the Invincible Armada, and believed that the appearance of those high excellences, physical and ethical, were indissolubly connected with the Reformation. The very name of Romanism was abhorred by him. His priest in *Westward Ho!* is the embodiment of trickery and cowardice and meanness. He had almost the same repugnance to a Jesuit that the Red Republican has to a black coat. He considered that mendacity was the note of Roman Catholics in general, and of Roman Catholic fathers in particular. Possessed by these sentiments, he rushed, in an ill-advised moment, into the strife with John Henry Newman. The most acute dialectician whom England has, perhaps, ever produced was engaged by a vigorous writer and a popular preacher, who was comparatively ignorant of the rudiments of metaphysical controversy. The original article in

Macmillan on two volumes of Mr. Froude's History, which commenced the dispute, and the pamphlet *What, then, does Dr. Newman mean?* are artless specimens of honest indignation; the *Apologetica pro Vita sua*, perfect as an illustration of subtly-sustained argument, is a masterpiece of English composition, and is rich in invective, more finished and not less powerful than that which its author levelled at the head of the 'recreant ecclesiastic' Dr. Achilli. Yet, in spite of the errors of judgment and method which marked his whole conduct on this occasion, a majority of his countrymen felt that Mr. Kingsley had in a rough and rude way placed before them something like the truth; and that the sanctions recognised by the Roman Catholic Church for the virtue of veracity were of a precarious and fluctuating kind. But the victory, for all that, lay with his opponent; and it was enough for the great Oratorian to play with the hostile pamphleteer to dispose of him. 'Dr. Newman,' wrote Professor Kingsley, 'has, by letter, expressed in the strongest terms his denial of the meaning which I have put upon his words. It only remains, therefore, for me to express my hearty regret at having so seriously mistaken him.' Dr. Newman's comments on this are worth quotation as a specimen of that peculiarly effective and humorously satirical style which is Dr. Newman's own.

'You have made a monstrous charge against me; direct, distinct, public. You are bound to prove it as directly, as distinctly, as publicly; or to own you can't. "Well," says Mr. Kingsley, "if you are quite sure you did not say it, I'll take your word for it; I really will." My word! I am dumb. Somehow I thought that it was my word that happened to be on trial. The word of a professor of lying that he does not lie. But Mr. Kingsley reassures me: "We are both gentlemen," he says; "I have done as much as one English gentleman can expect of another." I begin to see: he thought me a gentleman at the very time that he said I ought lying on system. After all, it is not I, but Mr. Kingsley, who did not mean what he said. *Habemus confitentem reum*. So we have confessedly come round to this preaching without practising; the common theme of satirists, from Juvenal to Walter Scott. "I left Baby Charles and Steenie laying his duty before him," says King James of the reprobate Dalgarns; "O Goordie, jingling Goordie, it was grand to hear Baby Charles laying down the guilt of dissimulation, and Steenie lecturing on the guilt of incontinence." While I feel, then, that Mr. Kingsley's February explanation is miserably insufficient for his January enormity, still I feel also that the correspondence which lies between these two acts of his constitutes a real satisfaction to those principles of historical and literary justice to which he has given so rude a shock. Accordingly I have put it into print, and make no further criticism on Mr. Kingsley.'

But it is not as the theological controversialist or the Cambridge

professor that his friends and the public will care to remember Charles Kingsley. To the former, who knew him in his domestic relations, he will ever be the Rector of Eversley,—the type of all that is excellent, energetic, God-fearing, chivalrous, in a country clergyman: the friend of the poor, the priest militant of the suffering, striving to realise in his life the model of that Christian righteousness which he proclaimed in his sermons, the same out of the pulpit as in it. For the latter he will take his place in English literature as one who, combining in himself to a very remarkable degree the influence of a distinct school of social and theological thought with a width of personal observation and an accuracy of knowledge rare in the case even of the professed and scientific reformer, not merely struck a new chord in English fiction, but admitted into its atmosphere a fresh and free current of vitalising, energising air. As a preacher Kingsley was not witnessed to the best advantage in the Abbey, from his connection with which he was most known in London. There were invariably passages of rare merit in his Westminster sermons, but they were very unequal as a whole. Nor was his voice sufficient to fill the building. The sentences begun in clear ringing tones, often died away into an inarticulate murmur before its close, and it was only on reading subsequently the printed version that the listener knew how much of pointed vigour he had missed. But at Eversley, or, as I heard him some five years ago in a little church just three miles from Bideford, in North Devon, his addresses were exceedingly effective. The tall slight figure tremulous with emotion, the flashing eye, and the kindling unaffected rhetoric riveted the attention of all. One who knew him well at his Hampshire rectory years ago has drawn a pleasant picture of him from the life. He was then ‘administering his parish with enthusiasm. Writing, reading, fishing, walking, preaching, talking, with a twenty-parson power, but was at the same time wholly unlike the ordinary and conventional parson. The picturesque bow-windowed rectory rises to memory as it stood with all its doors and windows open on certain hot summer days; the sloping bank, with its great fir-tree; the garden—a gravel sweep before the drawing room and dining-rooms; a grass plat before the study, hedged off from the walk; and the tall active figure of the rector tramping up and down one or the other. His energy made him seem every where, and to pervade every part of house and garden. The map of the book he was writing lay open on a rough standing desk which was merely a shelf projecting from the wall; his pupils—two in number, and treated like his own sons—were working in the dining-room, his guests perhaps lounging on the lawn or reading in the study. And he had time for all; going from writing to lecturing on optics or to a passage in Virgil, from this to a vehement conversation with a guest, or tender care for his wife, wh

was far from strong, or a romp with his children. He would work himself into a sort of white heat over his book, till, too excited to write more, he would calm himself down by a pipe, pacing his grass plat in thought and with long strides. He was a great smoker, and tobacco was to him a needful sedative. He always used a long and clean churchwarden, and these pipes used to be bought a barrellful at a time. They lurked in all sorts of unexpected places. A pipe would suddenly be extracted from a bush in the garden, filled and lighted as if by magic; or one has even been drawn suddenly from a whin bush on the heath some half mile from the house. But none was ever smoked which was in any degree foul: and when there was a vast accumulation of old pipes, enough to fill the barrel, they were sent back again to the kiln to be rebaked, and returned fresh and new. This gave him a striking simile, which, in *Alton Locke*, he puts into the mouth of James Coesthwaite. "Katie here believes in purgatory, where souls are burnt clean again like bacca-pipes." The same writer proceeds to tell us how thoroughly 'real' was Kingsley's parish visiting; how wide he 'believed absolutely in the message he bore to the poor, and the health his ministrations conveyed to their souls,' he was at the same time 'a zealous sanitary reformer, and cared for their bodies also;' how on one occasion, when visiting a sick man suffering from fever, finding 'the atmosphere of the little ground-floor room horrible, the rector, before he said a word, ran up-stairs, and to the great astonishment of the inhabitants of the cottage, bored with a large auger he had brought with him several holes above the bed's head for ventilation;' how on wet or cold week-day evenings he would 'sally forth in a fisherman's blouse—then, as always, studiously non-clerical in his costume—to a cottage lecture which he gave for the old and feeble who lived at a short distance from the church;' how he could always 'see the humorous side of such a gathering, especially when, as sometimes happened, it was in a loft, addressing his excellent curate as Brother Tadger, with a reminiscence of Dickens's Brick-lane Branch Temperance Meeting;' how 'old and new friends came and went as he grew famous, and the drawing-room evening conversations and readings, the tobacco parliaments later into the night, included many of the most remarkable persons of the time.'

Kingsley is so preeminently one of those writers whose work, both as to its nature and its intent, it is impossible fairly to estimate without a tolerably distinct idea of his personality, that I feel I need scarcely apologise to the author of this most interesting sketch in a recent number of the *Examiner*, for thus incorporating his remarks into my text. While I am writing this, I see an announcement that Mr. Thomas Hughes is about to give to the world a recollection of some of his conversations with Kingsley in the old

days when he wrote under the signature of 'Parson Lot.' I imagine that at that period there was little which Parson Lot felt strongly that he did not say in print, and say strongly too. To this I shall come presently. Meanwhile, it may be as well to attempt to assign to Charles Kingsley his true place in the course of recent thought, gauge with some approach to accuracy the intellectual forces which made him what he was, to indicate briefly his points of contact with contrast to the representatives of other social or speculative or ritual movements of his day. Kingsley's life was comparatively uneventful, that, when he died in January last, his biographers in the daily papers could find little more to do or to say than to give a catalogue of his works and a hurried *résumé* of their contents. What it is really important and interesting to know is why and what promptings these books were written. In answering this question, it is not enough to say that the Charles Kingsley of a quarter of a century ago was a young man of ardent enthusiasm for the cause of the people, of generous impulses, and gifted with a considerable aptitude of literary expression. He was indeed each of these, and he was as much *en rapport* with the spirit of his age as it is possible for such a nature to be. But long before he embraced letters as an active occupation, his mind had been receiving its education in the school whose precepts coloured it in all the labours and speculations of his indefatigable career. It is not unnatural to suppose that, as many persons still firmly believe, Charles Kingsley was educated at Rugby, under Arnold. As a matter of fact, he was not at Rugby or at any other public school; but the current of thought which carried him along was identical in its essential respects with that which flowed from Arnold as a source and in which it is customary to recognise the parent stream of political and ecclesiastical liberalism of modern times. Charles Kingsley, before he went to Cambridge, was the pupil of a son of the distinguished man whose intellectual initiative two or three generations earlier at that University resulted in the development of an intellectual and theological evangel, with the apostles of which Kingsley is to be classed. Samuel Taylor Coleridge is the true author of the latitudinarian cultus, the order of whose succession may be indicated by the names of Maurice, Julius Hare, and Kingsley; and Derwent Coleridge, the son of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, was Kingsley's tutor on Dartmoor. Thus, at the same time that the boy was acquiring a passion for those beauties of Devon which he was afterwards to depict in so consummately vivid a manner in his writings, he was also imbibing the rudiments of the social and religious philosophy of which he was destined to be known as one of the chief exponents.

It is not always easy to determine the precise place occupied by the two great universities in the plan of the development of modern

thought. But roughly speaking, as Cambridge may be associated with the origin of the school with which Kingsley is popularly identified, so Oxford may be considered in prominent connection with the movement that culminated in 1848. While on the Cam there were, as so many landmarks of intellectual progress, a Coleridge, a Maurice, a Julius Hare, and a Kingsley, there were springing up by the Isis such men as Keble and Newman, Hurrell Froude and Pusey. With the Cambridge religionists spiritual faith was a robust principle of practical and manly righteousness based upon the Christian revelation of Scripture. With the Oxford religionists of the order just mentioned, spiritual faith was more of an æsthetic emotion, the standard and principles of propriety in which were no doubt contained in the sacred narrative, but which were to be looked for in a precise and positive form in the dogmas of the Church and in the long chain of patristic traditions. It would not, I imagine, be difficult to show that these were the different directions in which what may be called the idiosyncratic thought of Oxford and Cambridge had respectively set since the Restoration. On the other hand, it is to be admitted that the distinction was somewhat obscured by actual events at the time when Maurice was lecturing to the undergraduates of Trinity, and Newman was installed as Fellow and Tutor of Oriel. In that Oxford college, which occupies a more conspicuous position in the genesis of all the great movements of this century than any other single institution, the two tides—those representative of Cambridge and of Oxford—may be said to have converged. If Faber was Fellow of Oriel, so also was Clough. If the stream of Tractarianism issued from its walls, so also did the school which to Tractarianism was an abomination. If Oriel gave us a Newman, it also gave us a Whately, as it had before given us Caplestone. And what was true of the college was true also of the University. The same *alma mater*, in this instance the same families, produced James Anthony Froude and Hurrell Froude, John Henry Newman and Francis Newman. It was with the Oxford Liberals that the Cambridge Liberals made common cause, and the teachings and writings of both of these were emphatic protests against the views of those whom the late Archbishop of Dublin delighted persistently to style the Tractists. Yet though the spirit which animated Kingsley was in its way one of antagonism to the historic school of Oxford, there was not a little generically identical in the two sets of influences. The Cambridge movement and the Oxford movement, as for the sake of convenience they may be called, were each of them a quickening of the spiritual life. The one may have found its satisfaction in translating and editing black-letter folios; the instincts of the other may have prompted its representatives to institute an aggressive war against social abuses. The doctrines of the religious reformers of Oxford may have paved the way to Rome;

the doctrines of the religious reformers of Cambridge may have suggested a short cut to Christian communism. But both were equally parts of one and the same theological revival.

This I believe may be regarded as a tolerably faithful account of the chief educational influences under which Kingsley had, at the commencement of his career, been brought. In pursuing and completing the estimate, it is necessary to lay special stress upon the great names—Maurice, Carlyle, and Froude. It is natural to speak of Kingsley in connection with the first of these, not only because he sat at his feet as a disciple, both at Cambridge and when a student of law in London at Lincoln's-inn chapel, but because he was allied with him in starting the Working Men's College, which still exists in Great Ormond-street, and in many other social enterprises. As it was from Maurice that Kingsley's theological convictions principally derived their precise doctrinal character and shape, so it was from the biographer of Frederick the Great and from the panegyrist of Henry VIII. that his more general views of life drew much of their colour, and gathered not a little of their substance. Carlyle may be traced the ideas with which he was penetrated to the solemnity of the relations of our daily existence; his profound belief in the dignity and deserts of labour, *quid* labour only; his admiration, which soon acquired with him a tenacity almost instinctive, for the strong man,—the King-man,—who moulds the habits and sways the destinies of his generation. To Froude it was that one should more directly refer that passion for the vigorous individuality of Protestantism, that enthusiasm for the strength and freedom of character, which Kingsley conceived was possible under Protestantism and no other religious system, which breathes every page of *Westward Ho!* A mind thus nurtured, and a temperament thus constituted, could, under the circumstances of the time, not fail to exercise themselves in the channel of literary activity which Kingsley chose, and to advocate the views which Kingsley advocated. If Kingsley had possessed less of culture on the one hand or less of poetic imagination on the other, he might have ended with being nothing more than a ranting demagogue or a vulgar agitator. As it was, these qualities conspired to intensify his convictions, and to cast a halo of romance over the manner in which his convictions found expression. In the *Saint's Tragedy* it was the poet, the philanthropist, and the Protestant who declaimed, with much beauty of thought and language, against the hypocrisy and professional asceticism, and the cowardice of a priesthood who arrogated to itself divine privileges. In *Yeast* and *Alton Locke* was the champion of the rights of the poor as against the neglect and the indifference of the rich. Long before Kingsley wrote these two books, it should be remembered that he had dwelt upon the epochs of our history which he has embodied in his *Elizabethan*

romance; that he had contracted an enthusiasm, not merely for the natural scenes amid which his plot was laid, but for the race of men whom he had chosen as his *dramatis personæ*. Saturated as Kingsley was with the newest of nineteenth-century thoughts, his nature was crossed by a strong vein of medievalism. His admiration for a bygone period, when the imperial position of England was unchallenged by the world, was united with that passionate interest in the actual condition of England which, as an ardent Christian philanthropist, he took. The men who had made Britain the supreme arbiter of Europe, who had repelled the Invincible Armada from its shores—the men who could wield a broadsword or chase a ship or mow an acre with the same energy and effect,—these very men, or their descendants, were to his vision enthralled, oppressed, ground down, by a selfish, a luxurious, a grasping oligarchy. To Kingsley every peasant was a Salvation Yeo *in posse*, every artisan a Jack Brimblecombe, and all the vigorous virtues of the English working-classes might revive, if only they were led by such sons of squires as Amyas Leigh. The social reformer drew his ideas of the possibilities of the present from the actual facts of the past. It was the contrast between what he conceived to be the condition of England in the nineteenth century, and what he loved to picture it as having been in the sixteenth or seventeenth, which prompted the *liberrima indignatio* of his pen. Our labouring population might—may, did—contain the nucleus of a breed of Elizabethan heroes; and lo, through the base indifference of their rulers—priests and squires, king, lords, and commons alike—we were degrading them into a caste of worse than Spartan helots.

Nor was it only the romance of history which lent its fire to this enthusiasm. The votary of the age of Elizabeth, when every full-grown man had as much honest beef to eat and beer or cider to drink as he could dispose of, was a minister of the Gospel; and did not the divinely-inspired word lend its sanction to this view? In Kingsley's view it did, and therefore the obligation was twofold. In such a frame of mind as this he wrote *Yeast* and *Alton Locke*. The former was suggested by his own experience of agricultural poverty and wretchedness, gathered in his capacity of country clergyman; the latter may have been prompted in the first instance by a series of letters which appeared in the *Morning Chronicle* drawing attention to the woes of the 'sweaters,' and proceeding from the pen of Mr. Mayhew. *Alton Locke* was foreshadowed in a pamphlet called *Cheap Clothes and nasty*, written by Kingsley under his nom de plume of 'Parson Lot.' 'He has,' remarked the *Edinburgh Review*, criticising the production at the time, 'incontinently become demented, and has now put forth a tract full of raving wholly unworthy of his scholarship and station, and containing much abuse of the economists, who, so far, are after all only philantthro-

pists more sober, thoughtful, and wary than himself.' It must be admitted that Parson Lot had said something to justify and to provoke the stricture. "'The man is mad,'" he writes, 'says Mammon, smiling in supercilious pity. Yes, Mammon; as mad as Paul before Festus, and for much the same reason too. Much learning has made us mad. From two articles in the *Morning Chronicle* on the condition of the working tailors we learnt too much to leave us altogether masters of ourselves.' That society is out of joint; that its anomalies can only be cured by an entire remodelling of the system, not a furbishing up; that the miseries of the masses—'their inability to find work, or to obtain in return for such work as can be performed in reasonable time and by ordinary strength a sufficiency of the comforts and necessities of life—may all be traced to one source—*competition*; that the antagonistic and regenerative principle which must be introduced is *association*, breathing as it does the very spirit of our Divine Master;' such are the central positions taken up by Kingsley in *Cheap Clothes and nasty*, in the pamphlet entitled *Christian Socialism*, and in *Alton Locke*. It is needless here to enter into any argument to demonstrate the frantic futility of the attempt in which Charles Kingsley sought to enlist society. As a novel *Alton Locke*, notwithstanding such delightful sketches as Tom Thurnall and Grace Harvey, notwithstanding also the extraordinary vigour of its style and the strong and swift felicity of its description, is inferior to *Westward Ho!* Its plot is too extravagant, its combination of incidents too *bizarre*. It is indeed a heterogeneous and inartistic grouping of journeymen tailors who can correct Latin proofs and know the logical jargon of the schoolmen; of Radical *ouvriers* who are well read in Italian literature; of aristocratic dames who hob and nob with casual artisans; of stifling courts and over-populated fever-dens; of crowded alleys and pestilential workshops.

Mr. Kingsley was also at this period occupied, in conjunction with Professor Maurice, in bringing out a series of tracts called *Politics for the People*, so strongly seasoned with vituperation of the governing classes that it is not surprising they occasioned a very considerable amount of offence. These pamphlets were not undisguisedly suggested by the French Revolution of 1848. 'I am,' wrote Kingsley in one of these, 'a radical reformer. I am not one of those who laugh at your petition of the 10th of April; I have no patience with those who do. . . My only quarrel with the Charter is that it does not go far enough. It disappointed me bitterly when I read. It seemed a harmless cry enough; but a poor bald constitution-mongering cry as ever I heard. That French cry "*Organisation of Labour*" is worth a thousand of it, and yet it does not go to the bottom by a mile.' 'What,' he asks in the same publication, 'is the use of brilliant language about peace and the majesty of order and universal love,

though it may be printed in letters a foot long, when it runs in the same team with ferocity, railing, mad one-eyed excitement?' Nor was the rector of Eversley much more temperate in his discourses addressed from the pulpit. The *Message of the Church to Working Men* was a sermon preached in Charlotte-street, Fitzroy-square, which not unnaturally drew down upon itself the vials of the wrath of the *Quarterly Review*. Mr. Kingsley then said that if the divine statement meant anything, it meant this: 'that all systems of society which favour the accumulation of capital in a few hands, which oust the masses from the soil which their forefathers possessed of old, . . . are contrary' to the Divine Will. 'Thus,' commented the *Quarterly* reviewer, 'Scripture—with the additional patches of the tailor, which our readers have not failed to recognise—is wrested to downright Communism.'

It is not to be denied that Kingsley's views, as here enunciated, pushed to their logical conclusion, lead to communism, any more than it is that Mrs. Lynn Linton's story of *Joshua Davidson*, and Mr. Pullen's trenchant sketch, *Christianity a Civilised Heathenism*, so far as they are attempts to show that Christian principles can only be literally and faithfully practised by a reversion to the customs common under the primitive Church, are *pro tanto* arguments in favour of socialism, or are rather a *reductio ad absurdum* of the whole Christian system. But there is this distinction between the socialism of Joshua Davidson and the socialism of Parson Lot. The former finds its expression in what is merely a very clever *tour de force*; the book is solely designed as a display of intellectual and literary power, and it is unquestionably most effective. But Kingsley wrote *Alton Locke* with a very different purpose than to parade his abilities. He honestly believed that the doctrines which he advocated were practicable; nay, he engaged in the endeavour to put them in operation himself. He was instrumental in actually forming a Working Tailors' Association in London, 'ready to wage internecine war with Nebuchadnezzar and Co.' Of course the experiment was a failure. True, Mr. Kingsley would have replied, and indeed did reply; 'but our work will be incomplete till we have blended all these associations into one vast guild. Competition will then be out of question.' True, responded Mr. Kingsley's critics (*Edin. Review*, Jan. 1851), 'but it will be replaced by *monopoly*: and we all know what monopoly means—artificial prices, a restricted market, a gigantic job, a final and inevitable smash. To sum up the whole, the advocates of association as a cure for competition are caught between the two horns of a dilemma, which half Mr. Kingsley's sagacity, if united with a less vivid fancy and a less copious vocabulary, would from the first have enabled him to foresee—in case you have many associations you retain all the evils of competition; in case you merge them all into one, you encounter

all the evils of monopoly.' It may seem remarkable at the present time that so shrewd a judgment as Kingsley's undoubtedly should have suffered itself to be misled by a social fallacy so outrageous. The explanation is not far to seek. A fiery enthusiasm and an undisciplined sympathy were fed by materials which might well arouse indignation and draw forth invective. The state things described in *Alton Locke* and *Yeast* has, thank Heaven, passed so completely away, that it may be difficult to the present generation to realise the amount of severe historical truth which the most fervid descriptions and most highly-wrought scenes convey. In a short while the books will be comparatively forgotten; but as a narrative of and a commentary on the period in which they were written they will possess an eternal value. They may not deserve to be read or to live for their artistic merit as novels, and yet it is as novels—for the same purpose as novels of any other class—sheer amusement—that they have been read by the enormous majority of the public any time during the last two decades. The abuses which Kingsley then attacked, the social cruelties and iniquities which he exposed with such scathing indignation and so tremendously incisive a pen, were realities. The remedy which he suggested was delusive, but about the genuineness of the evil there was no doubt. Let it be understood that at this epoch of his life Kingsley was working in the same line as Oastler, and Sadler, and Bull, and Lord Ashley. Let it be remembered that he was poet by nature and visionary by temperament; that he was a clergyman who, instructed by Maurice, had conceived the purpose of applying in the letter as well as in their spirit the truths of Christianity to modern society; that, in addition to this, he was impregnated with the philosophy of Carlyle, whose watchwords he had caught up, whose style he not unseldom reproduced,—let these things be borne in mind, and the phenomenon is not after all so strange. Of course the years which 'bring the philosophic mind' mellowed the certainties of Kingsley's social doctrines, and subdued the extravagance of his speculative reforms. When the Legislature had taken a more liberal view of the necessities and the sufferings of the work classes; when 'the two nations' described by Mr. Disraeli in *Sibyl*—a novel that should be read side by side with *Alton Locke* and *Yeast*—were merged into something more nearly approaching identity, the Christian socialist disappeared. He became the literary reformer, expatiating upon the additional grace conferred on Devonshire hill-side by a row of red drainage tiles.

Just as Kingsley's early and violent radicalism must be associated with the advance of those ideas in England which were generated by the French Revolution of 1848, so there are special points in his scheme of literary creation which may be partially attributed to the influence of historical events, as well as to the innate

dencies of his mind. It has been the fashion to speak of Kingsley as the founder of the school of muscular Christianity. He has even been discovered to be the progenitor of the race of Guy-Livingstonian heroes and Ouida's guardsmen. In refutation of this latter preposterous doctrine, it is enough to say that the difference between the brawny paragons of Kingsley and the Herculean debauchees of Mr. Lawrence is exactly that which separates a Haymarket bully from the vigorous defender of the honour of his wife or the purity of his daughter. Independently of the fact that Kingsley's imagination had feasted upon those periods of English history when our forefathers were all of them supposed to have been cast in the heroic and true knightly mould, and that since our ideals of human excellence had, in Kingsley's judgment—as we know from his own words—become physically misshaped, dwarfed, and stunted, a very general worship of force and courage had set in among us as one of the results of the anti-revolutionary war on the Continent. Moreover, Kingsley was an optimist. He believed in something very like the perfectibility of humanity. He maintained, that as many things human were bad, so everything human might be good; that human intellect turned to honest purposes was most godlike; and that human sinews and fibres devoted to high ends were most admirable. A writer and a thinker who dwelt so much upon the human aspect of Christianity not unnaturally peoples his pages, now and again, with a race of something like to human demigods. And his ideal was also a protest. Hitherto it had been the custom for writers of fiction to represent the diminutive, the sickly, and the feeble members of their *dramatis personæ* as the exclusive depositories of religious conviction and principle. The children's stories, in which the bad boy lived and the good boy invariably died before the last chapter, were but a burlesque on the traditional doctrine of the fictions of the period. This was the kind of cant against which Kingsley directed such a creation as Amyas Leigh. And it is not out of place in an analysis of the motives which, consciously or unconsciously, operated with Kingsley in his literary exaltation of the representatives of muscular Christianity, to suggest that the idea of championship may have had some influence in determining his thoughts in this direction. There was ever before his mind the idea that the labouring and the poor were a race persecuted and oppressed; that they could only be raised from a condition of abject serfdom—first, by the display on their own part of those qualities which he concentrates in such a figure as the hero of *Westward Ho!* secondly, by attracting to their cause some strong man—the Carlylean idea—some *προστάτης τοῦ δήμου*, who should at once command their loyalty, and strike awe into the bosoms of their enemies, by his universal recognition as a foreordained champion of their rights.

To sum up: the place which Kingsley will probably occupy in

English literature is not so large as some of his partisans imagine, and certainly not so large as one might have been led to suppose from the prominence of the attention that his works attracted during their lifetime. Indeed, the popularity which his novels have in different periods secured is one of the reasons why the durability of his fame is doubtful. No man has written in the course of the century—not Tennyson or Carlyle—who so accurately appreciated the temper of his times as Kingsley; who entered so fully into the aspirations, who devoted himself so unreservedly to the service of his contemporaries, spiritual and material. To the historian of the future, *Yeast*, *Alton Locke*, and, should that hypothetical work come, to write something more than a narrative of superficial phenomena, Kingsley's sermons, will be a repertory of priceless information. But novels or the works which appeal to a peculiar set of feelings, and which relate exclusively to a particular period, are inevitably ephemeral. Nor can Kingsley's genius redeem them from this fate. It is different with *Westward Ho!* That fiction may not be the one in which Kingsley has shown most power, but it is unquestionably that which will live the longest. Its incidents are more varied, its canvas is broader, its purview is altogether more commanding. Just as in *Hypatia* Kingsley devotes himself to hinting of the grandeur of the new Europe and the new faith, in *Westward Ho!* he draws the horoscope of the new England which the era of Elizabethan Protestantism discloses. In the novels there is at least nothing of that journalistic element which predominates in *Yeast* and *Alton Locke*. I have left myself no space to speak of Kingsley's poetry; though he has written no poetry of real beauty, has produced the best extant specimens of English hexameter, and is perhaps never more really poetical than in some of his prose passages. Here at least is one illustration which may appropriately conclude this article—it is from one of his latest essays, the *Air Mothers*: 'Will they live again, the chilled air mothers? Yes, they must live again. For all that move for ever, and not even ghosts can rest. . . . Men call them the south-west wind, and their ghosts the north-east trade; and we fear them, and rightly, because they bear the traders out and bring them across the sea. But wise men and little children should look at them with more seeing eyes, and say, May not these winds be living creatures? They, too, are thoughts of God, to whom all life returns. For is not our life like their life? Do we not come and go as they? Out of God's boundless bosom, the fount of life, we come; through selfish stormy youth and contrite tears just not too late; through manhood not altogether useless; through slow and dull old age, return from whence we came—to the bosom of God once more—go forth again, it may be, with fresh knowledge and fresh power to nobler work.'

T. H. S. ESCOTT.

'WHEN SPARROWS BUILD'

A Tale, in two Chapters

BY MRS. A. S. BEATTIE

CHAPTER I. 'MY LOVE THAT LOVED ME SO.'

Do you remember a tale in a certain old-fashioned story-book, popular in its day as are any of Lewis Carroll's or Knatchbull-Hugessen's nowadays, the childish hero of which is represented in a chronic and most unenviable state of indecision as to which of the four seasons he liked best? In spring the never-to-be-satisfied infant wished it were 'always spring;' and so on with summer, autumn, and winter in their respective turns. Well, for my part, though I fully appreciate the delights of skating, sliding, and snow-balling, though I more than appreciate the pleasure of sitting under, if not my own fig-tree, at least a gooseberry-bush in which I have full proprietary rights, I must confess my preference is given to that pleasant season when, after the long death-like silence of winter, the birds begin to revisit us, and having engaged lodgings from the trees, their landlords set about preparing for their reception by decking their abodes with the freshest and sweetest of greenery. Wise also in their generation are they, for they render their houses so attractive, that they are never without the gayest and prettiest and most musical of lodgers (which last, however, isn't always an advantage, O cornet-playing neighbour of mine), who, when compelled to take flight to warmer lands, never fail to return with others of their kindred. O my landlady, is it useless beseeching thee to apply the moral herein so touchingly conveyed? How many years more must I endure the sight of that grimy Kidderminster, those thrice-dyed curtains of ensanguined hue with rusty-velvet border, those hydrophobic china curs, that cut-paper abomination in the grate, those frousy horsehair chairs and that comfortless sofa, for which, to judge by their antiquity, Bucephalus himself may have furnished the covering? I'll stand them no longer. By Jove, I won't! Wanted, a respectable lodging, by a quiet middle-aged gentleman. I'm off! But Mrs. Jones stands watching me from her front-parlour window, and the burden of her song is this: 'He will return, I know he will; for where else will he find such a quiet street, and where else will he get his mutton-chop cooked to a turn?' And upon my word, my worthy soul, I believe you are right.

Spring it was when the little domestic drama to which these

pages relate acted itself out—never mind how many years an unusually mild genial spring too, which covered the land maturely with verdure, and caused every hawthorn hedge and cranny to resound with the twitter-twitter of birds seeking mates. The scene was one of England's vaunted *homes*, a Elizabethan structure, half house, half castle, wholly beautiful picturesque in its surroundings, and situated in the lovely county of Hants; a house with its famed gallery of Old Masters, its extensive park and landscape gardens, its pineries and hothouses, its lake and winding silver river. And the *dramatis persone*! At a moment, and you shall have them. Stay; let me play the part of the *diable boiteux* retrospectively, and follow where I lead. Your way along that shrubbery, keep to the left under those elm-trees; now skirt along the side of the house until you reach the conservatory, and there pause.

It is dark, past nine, and none of the guests in yonder brilliantly lighted room can see us, though we can see them. Take a peep in here, and see what a paradise wealth can make of an English home; look at those gorgeous exotics, those wonderful ferns, the masses of rich vivid colouring and dark-green glittering foliage; listen to the splash-plash of the water in yonder marble basin; while you may in the subtle intoxicating multiplicity of perfume fresh from nature's great laboratory. What a deliciously subtle light, what soft tempting *caususes*, what a place for lovers! Let me say you? Look there, in that far corner; what do you see? A man and a woman, two evils which unfortunately attract each other. A great, stalwart, sunburnt, ruddy-bearded man, talking eagerly, earnestly, with folded arms and clouded brow, to a woman who is looking into his face with a strangely pitying gaze, and a filmy tearful expression in her blue eyes; a fair queenly woman, grand, white, sloping shoulders, and arms round and perfect sculptured Carrara marble. What is it—a rejected suit or a long quarrel? But stay; she raises her white left hand half absentmindedly to pluck a faded flower from an exotic beside her, and on the ring-finger glistens—what ought not to be there, or, being there, should not have been forgotten—a tiny band of gold, a wedding-ring. A false friend, false wife, shame on you! Shame! Softly, my friends, they will hear you. Are you one of those who have so low an opinion of your kind as to hold that friendship, pure and unadulterated, cannot exist between a man and a woman without evil creeping in like the serpent in Eden? *Honi soit qui mal y pense*. My friend's mate of myself and my brethren is higher, ay and juster, than yours. There is no love-making, however, in this case, or if there be, it is vicarious, and Ethel Paget is as true a wife to Maitland Paget, late M.P. for the county of Hants, and as good a mother to the little Pagets of various ages and sizes, as ever vowed to love, honour, and obey.

and obey at St. George's, Hanover-square. Play the eavesdropper a little longer, and your doubts will be set at rest. He speaks.

'Mrs. Paget, you have been very good to me, very; but it's all over now. I know from her own lips to-night what I have sometimes thought, but shrank from allowing myself to believe—Clarice does not care for me.'

'Clarice is very foolish, very petulant; but indeed, indeed I think you wrong her, Major Vaughan.'

'Then why, why,' with an impatient movement of the great shoulders, 'did she trifle with me? Why did she do everything she knew I disliked? I daresay you think me a jealous brute, Mrs. Paget, but it drives me mad to see her go on as she does with that young Percy, d—n him! I beg your pardon'—very humbly—'I forgot what I was saying. You know I would give my very heart's blood for her, and she—well, sometimes she seemed to care for me, when we were alone, before *he* came, I almost thought she did; and now before strangers she treats me as—as she has done to-day—as if there had never been anything between us. I can't stand it, Mrs. Paget. By Heaven, I can't and won't!'

And in his excitement he rises and strides in the direction of the drawing-room, his hands clenched and his face working, nearly overthrowing a rare plant in his passion. She follows him, and lays her hand gently on his arm.

'Major Vaughan, I am grieved for you, doubly grieved for Clarice. Let me speak to her—do let me; and all may yet be well. Poor little Clarice, she does not know what love she is throwing away. Will you let me?'

He turns like an obedient child at the touch of the kind little hand.

'Mrs. Paget, you are very good, but it would be useless. I believe she cares more for Harry Percy's little finger'—another expletive, of which she takes no notice—'than for me body and soul; and I'd give both for her, God knows. He won't marry her; he can't; for he's engaged to another woman, and should be with her in town instead of philandering down here'—savagely. 'No, I've made up my mind what to do. I must leave this to-morrow, Mrs. Paget, or I shall go mad. I won't have my happiness destroyed by a woman; I'll go back to Canada and look after my estate, settle down to farming, anything!' Then the resolution in his voice gradually dying away: 'O Mrs. Paget, I'm very miserable!'

'If it must be, it must,' she answers sadly. 'Does she know of your intention?'

'Ay.'

'And when do you sail?'

'On the 30th; I see by the paper that a vessel, the *Aurora*, leaves Liverpool for Montreal on that date. I shall stay three days

in London; can I do anything for you?'—trying to appear unconcerned—'any commissions I can execute? I assure you I am an excellent judge of ladies' requirements.'

She shakes her head.

'And if—' she asks hesitatingly.

'It is all over indeed, Mrs. Paget. Stay; if you have any to write about, this address will find me until the Aurora sails.'

And he scribbles a few words in a pocket-book, tears out a leaf, and gives it to her; as she takes it a sudden impulse seizes him, and bending low he touches the pretty white hand reverently with his lips.

'God in heaven bless you, Mrs. Paget! Next to my mother are the best woman I have ever known.'

Raising her sweet eyes, swimming in tears, to his face he whispers, 'I too have suffered.' Ah me! what a wondrous bond of fellowship between two human souls such suffering makes!

Suddenly a deep silence falls on the gay company in the conservatory beyond; a lady rises and goes to the piano, nimble fingers execute a brief weird prelude, and then in a full, rich, wondrously sweet soft voice float out on the still evening air those touching plaintive words of Jean Ingelow's:

'When sparrows build, and the leaves break forth,
My old sorrow wakes and cries.'

Every word is distinctly uttered, and goes straight to the hearts of the listeners, and in the eyes of more than one there are tears. Again and again the sad refrain; the wail of a soul to whom penitence comes too late steals through the room, and echoes muffled in the ears of those two in the conservatory. *He* listens with his head bowed low on his breast, and his nervous sinewy fingers clasp each other convulsively in the excess of his emotion, but speaks never a word. *She* hears it impatiently, restlessly, and almost, muttering the while, 'How could she? How could she be chosen that?'

As the last note dies away, sounding in their ears almost like a knell, they rise simultaneously, and walk towards the drawing-room.

There, you have seen enough; the spell is broken; the tale vanishes; and I will tell you the rest of the story in my own way.

'O Major Vaughan,' cried a young lady as they entered, 'your Canadian ladies sing like that? Was it not exquisite song?'

He controlled himself with a violent effort, as he replied

'Come, come, Miss Seymour, I really can't allow my countrywomen to be disparaged as you will persist in doing; I have

many fine voices among them. As to the song—yes, it's pretty' ('Pretty! O my God!' to himself); 'but I prefer something less doleful. Miss Paget is in good voice to-night.'

'Yes; I never heard an amateur sing as she does; she throws so much soul, so much expression into her words.'

'Yes,' said Vaughan dryly; 'I quite agree with you.'

Then just as he was beginning to chafe inwardly at the thought of being longer victimised by the young lady's small-talk, Mr. Paget, a tall, portly, happy-looking country squire, came to his relief, button-holed, and carried him off to talk Canadian politics; while Miss Seymour, being entreated to add her quota to the evening's entertainment, simpered and pleaded cold, and then simpered again, and said she would try, but that really her singing would not be worth hearing after Miss Paget's (which her auditors felt to be painfully true); and finally, after conducting herself after the idiotic fashion of young women who can sing and play 'a little' (would that it were less!), sat down to the instrument, and performed in a small piping voice a very lively French chansonette, each verse ending with the inevitable tra-la-la, which she specially selected because Major Vaughan did not like doleful ditties. Unfortunately, the attention was lost on him; for on her asking afterwards if that were not his style, he replied absently, 'Yes, indeed, I always prefer simple English ballads.' The insulted damsel cast a withering glance at him, intended utterly to annihilate him (so it would have done, I daresay, had he only seen it), and walked off in high dudgeon. She subsequently revenged herself in a measure, being gifted with a certain amount of sharpness and petty malice, which passed current for wit, by dubbing him among her select circle of intimate friends, kindred spirits, 'Ursa Major.'

Then Miss Paget sang again, Blumenthal's 'Message,' and Major Vaughan stood watching her in the doorway, stroking viciously his great tawny moustache. She was a fair slight girl of eighteen, with a profusion of wavy golden hair, drawn off her face, and confined by fillets in the old Greek fashion, which would not become many faces, but suited hers well; she had a delicately-cut profile; a small snaky nose, just the least bit in the world *retroussé*; large, defiant, rognish blue eyes; a sweet mutinous mouth, whose office should have been a sinecure, so often did the eyes do duty for it; small pearly teeth; and an exquisitely moulded little figure. In every flash of the blue eyes, in every turn of the pretty head, you might read, as plainly as though she bore it branded on her smooth white brow, the hateful word coquette. Beside her, turning over the pages as she sang, stood a tall, slight, good-looking young man of three- or four-and-twenty; the same Harry Percy who had been twice so ruthlessly consigned to perdition by the Major, and who ought to have been not *where he was*, the recreant knight. Somehow, in

a mutual attempt to turn over the page at the last verse, their fingers met; a slight pressure was interchanged, so slight that none but the jealous eyes watching the pair from the doorway could have detected it. Clarice drew her hand away with a light laugh, and then Harry, stooping, said a few words in a low tone, which brought the colour welling into the singer's fair face, and sent Vaughan back into the conservatory with something very like an oath on his lips. It was a foolish little speech, one of the silly little inanities of the day, with, I daresay, half a dozen 'awfullys' in it; but Clarice made the most of it—far more, Heaven knows, than the speaker ever intended—and, with the Major's eyes fixed on her (she felt he was watching her), she raised her eyes to young Percy's face, flashed at him a glance in which a world of meaning was expressed, which made the poor lad's heart beat faster than its wont, spoke a few words in a confidential tone, though they were nothing more than an inquiry as to whether he liked her song, and then, having done as much mischief for the time being as she could devise, looked across the room to find that the object of her coquetry had disappeared.

Then she finished her song, and the guests rose to seek their respective couches. Major Vaughan walked up to the squire with outstretched hand.

'Good-night, Paget,' he said; 'or rather good-bye.'

Mr. Paget raised his eyebrows interrogatively.

'Why, good gracious, Vaughan, you're not thinking of leaving us?'

And then a chorus of voices feminine exclaimed, 'O Major Vaughan, indeed you must not go! Remember the charades on Tuesday; you promised faithfully to be the Corsair, and Miss Paget is to do *Gulnare*.'

'I'm very sorry,' he replied, 'but I'm really compelled to go; I've had bad news—from—Canada' (colouring very much; for to this brave honest soldier a lie did not come glibly), 'and my presence is urgently required there. As to the Corsair, Miss Seymour, I've no doubt you can easily supply my place. Stay; I'll find you a substitute. Mr. Percy, will you represent me and play Conrad—to—Miss Paget's *Gulnare*? I'm sure you'll do it far better than I.'

Then he shook hands hastily with them all, those friends of six weeks' standing, who were so sorry to lose one who had contributed so largely to their amusement. When it came to Percy's turn, he hesitated; then for form's sake, and to avoid remark, went through the customary greeting; but, judging by the expression of his eyes, I fear that, had it been the fashion in those days for gentlemen to wear rings *à la Borgia*, poor Harry would have slept soundly, far too soundly, that night. Purposely or not he left Clarice to the last, and one who stood near said afterwards that the great brow hand trembled as he held it out to her.

‘Good-bye, Miss Paget.’

A commonplace farewell enough, but she bit her lips, and grew a shade paler as she answered in her clear resolute tones :

‘Good-bye, Major Vaughan ; we are sorry to lose you.’

‘Yes,’ whispered Miss Seymour viciously to young Percy, ‘that’s just it. She is very sorry to—lose him ; indeed, I call it perfectly disgraceful the persistent way in which *some* people have set their caps at Major Vaughan.’

And the young lady, who had not disdained to angle in her own peculiar feeble little way for the great Canadian fish, who would not even look at her bait, tossed her chignoned head, and sniffed virtuously in the air.

Vaughan held the little hand for a moment, and tried to look in the face for the one sign of penitence that should bid him stay ; but it was averted, and its owner was regarding with great interest a bunch of roses on the carpet. Then he released her, and she, saying good-night to her friends, and a few more stupid frivolous words to Harry Percy, *à propos* of the parts they were to play, left the room, Mrs. Paget looking after her with vexed eyes, and saying to herself, ‘You heartless, heartless little coquette !’

The gentlemen proceeded to the smoking-room, where Vaughan, as was his custom, presently joined them ; but he seemed unusually dull for him, and their best jokes and most piquant stories fell flatly on his ears. At last his answers to their questions fell so wide of the mark, and his manner became so absent and distraught, that one of his greatest admirers, a jolly young fox-hunting squire, whose broad acres and broader form had been twice relentlessly refused by Clarice, whispered to his neighbour that, ‘By Jove, old Vaughan was hard hit at last ! He couldn’t have been refused ; such a contingency was quite out of the question ; so why the deuce didn’t he go in and win ?’

‘May I come in, Clarice ?’ said Ethel Paget, as in dressing-gown and with slippered feet she stood an hour later at the door of her sister-in-law’s room. Thrice she had knocked, and got no answer. ‘Surely, surely she cannot be asleep,’ she thought.

At the sound of her voice the door was quickly unlocked. ‘O, come in, Ethel. I had no idea you were there ; I thought it was only that tiresome little Emmy Seymour ; and I could not stand any of her nonsense to-night, so I pretended to be asleep.’

‘Yes, I can quite understand that,’ said her sister sternly ; ‘there has been nonsense enough to satisfy even you this evening.’

‘Ethel !’

‘Yes, Clarice, I have come to speak to you very, very seriously ; but first—am I to understand that all is over between you and Maurice Vaughan ?’

'You have no right to suppose that there was ever anything between us, Ethel.'

'Don't prevaricate, Clarry. I know this, that for the last five weeks—until—until Harry Percy came, you have led on Major Vaughan by word and look, and your unmistakable preference for his society, to believe that you returned the affection you know he felt for you. Let me speak. You won his heart, the heart of a brave, good, noble man, and the passionate earnest love which a man of his nature too often gives—God knows how, God knows why—to a woman of yours, who is so infatuated, so blind, so frivolous, that she cannot appreciate it, nor distinguish between a wretched tawdry counterfeit and a pure, brilliant, flawless gem. You led him on and on, and then, when you had got all he had to give, flung him aside, as you've done with others before now; flung him aside, and began to play your old game of fast and loose with a man who is engaged to another woman.'

'Ethel, you have no right to say this; it is not true.'

'It is true; you know it is. Don't think that Maurice Vaughan has come tale-bearing to me. I noticed his misery, and spoke to him, and he simply told me that you no longer cared for him, and that he still loved you—ay, Clarice, loved you, in spite of your wayward, heartless, childish ways—so dearly, that the same roof must no longer continue to shelter you both. I needed no telling; for I saw with my own eyes this night my sister behaving as no young lady in decent society should behave, ogling and flirting and coquetting with—an engaged man.'

'You shall not speak so to me, Ethel; you shall not. Now hear me. I did—flirt, as I suppose you would call it, with Major Vaughan, and he proposed for me, but I did not regularly accept him. I told him that I would give him an answer before he left, but that I could not make up my mind so suddenly. He seemed satisfied; but I expressly stipulated that it was not to be considered an engagement. Then Harry Percy came—we were children together, you know—and I was glad to see him, and we walked together a good deal, and—and— Well, we did talk a little nonsense, daresay, but you know that's only my way; I didn't mean anything.'

'Your way! Yes, you don't mean anything; you never do.'

'Don't sneer, Ethel. Well, Major Vaughan thought proper to interfere, and take me to task about it. I disputed his right to do so; he resented, and I then told him that he had merely expedited my answer, which was now "No;" that it probably might have been "Yes;" but that I was not a child to be ordered about by him; that I had a special horror of a jealous husband; and finally, that as I saw we should never agree on certain points, it was best that we should forget all that had passed.'

'And you really care for Harry Percy?'

'Harry Percy! Ethel, how can you? Why should I care for him? I'd just as soon think of marrying a broomstick' (which was a most unkind allusion to poor Harry's tall and somewhat lanky figure). 'No; I like to tease him—I always have since I was five years old—and to make fun of the future Mrs. Harry, who has carrotty hair, a turned-up nose—no, it's not the least bit like mine, Ethel—and heaps of money; she's a cotton-spinner's daughter. Why, you dear old foolish thing, I might have had Harry any time these four years; but not even the prospect of being Lady Percy at some future day tempted me. I leave that honour to Miss Cotton-spinner, who, I've no doubt, will fill the post with dignity. Lady Arry Percy, I should think she'll call herself.'

And twirling round she made a low obeisance before the cheval-glass in the form of what children call a 'cheese,' and then backed, treading on her dressing-gown betimes, until, but for Ethel, she would have ended by immolating herself in the grate. This pantomime was intended truly and faithfully to represent the presentation at court of the future cotton-spinning ornament of the peerage, the cheval-glass taking the place of the sacred person of royalty.

'Don't be so silly, Clarice; please, please listen to what I have to say. Don't let a trifling dispute like this come between you and your life's happiness; if, indeed, you care for no one else—and I believe, child, you do not; for you don't know what love is—think of what you are throwing away, and don't break a good man's heart with your folly. You may not be regularly "in love" with Maurice Vaughan, but he is a man no woman could live long with without loving most deeply. Forgive me, Clarry; but I have often thought he was well suited to take care of a giddy little thing like you. It would never do for you to marry a man you could not respect or look up to.'

'Thank you, Ethel, for your flattering opinion of me. Upon my word, you're a good advocate; one would think you were in love with Major Vaughan yourself. Now, Ethel, tell the truth; you don't mean to say you were ever really *épris* with Maitland before you married him? Dear old fat, red-faced, pompous Maitland, who hasn't a soul for anything but his dogs and horses, unless, indeed, it be our eternal "family" (I wish there were no such things as pedigrees) or those horrid tiresome Blue-books: "The country, sir, the country under her present government is going fast to ruin!"' sticking one hand in her dressing-gown and ruffling her hair with the other, as was her respected brother's custom when, to the terror of his audience, he got the political bit between his teeth, and went off full gallop. 'Gracious goodness! I should have thought he was about the last person in the world to inspire the tender passion.'

And at the ludicrous ideas connected with two such perfectly

incompatible things as her brother and spooneyism, the provoking girl went off into an irrepressible fit of laughter.

'Clarry darling, don't, please don't,' said her sister; and a look of pain crossed the sweet fair face. Then kneeling beside the girl, she laid her hand on the round white arm: 'Clarice, I will tell you what I have never told to mortal; what I expect you to keep as sacred from others as I have hitherto done. Years ago, when I was a young girl, a silly vain young thing, I was brought up by my aunt—my parents died in India, you know, when I was a little child—with the one idea paramount in my brain that my beauty was to win for me a rich husband and a good position. My aunt Lady Onslow, a clever unscrupulous woman of the world, took care that none save eligible people should be thrown in my way; and I had several proposals, though none which quite realised her view for me. I did not care for any of my admirers in particular, but I loved admiration in general, and gave encouragement to so many without, as you say, meaning anything, that I soon gained for myself the reputation of being the most heartless desperate flirt in the county. At last I met with a just punishment. We were staying, Lady Onslow and I, at Sir John Seymour's, an uncle of Emmy's, and there, for the first time in my useless butterfly existence, I knew what love meant. He, Herbert Gifford, was an officer in the East India Company's Service, clever, well connected, but a young son, with little beyond his pay. After a short acquaintance he proposed, and without a moment's hesitation I accepted him. My aunt was furious, and so brought her influence to bear upon me, weak fool that I was, that I finally gave in to the force of her clever, worldly, mercenary arguments, and dismissed the man I loved better than all the world besides without even a parting word—Lady Onslow was far too wily to permit that—with nothing but a few cold meagre lines, written at her dictation, telling him the miserable cowardly lie that I found I was mistaken as to the extent of my regard for him. He replied to that note, offering, poor fellow, to wait even an indefinite period if I would only marry him in the end. He had, he said, sufficient interest at head-quarters to procure a staff appointment, and if I would hold out any, the most distant hope, he would come home at my bidding to fetch me, or would arrange for me to go out to his sister in Calcutta, from whose house we could be married. He could not believe I had ceased to care for him, and if I would only reconsider my determination, he would work for me as Jacob had done for Rachel; he would slave as men had never slaved for woman. It was a simple, touching, manly letter, and I could never have withstood the eager trusting appealing loving him as I did; but—Clarice, pity me—I never saw it four years after, until the ink was faded and the paper yellow with age, until the hand that had penned the kind loving words had mouldered

into clay. She, Lady Onslow, took care of that; but she forgot to destroy the record of her crime, for it was no less; and afterwards, when I was Maitland's wife, I found it among her papers when she was lying dead in the next room, and, God forgive me, I cursed her for it. He went out to India, went to his death, thinking me, and justly, a wicked heartless woman. He never even tried for an appointment, but rejoined his regiment, and was killed not long after in a skirmish with one of the hill-tribes. They found him lying under a bush, with the death-smile on his face, shot through the heart; and when those who loved him for his noble guileless nature laid him in his lonely grave they took from his breast a miniature that I had given him. It was sent to his sister, and she—she had been an old friend and schoolfellow of mine—gave it back to me on her return from India. I will show it you some day, Clarice; it and the old faded letter are all I have left of one of the noblest men that ever trod God's earth. I met your brother long afterwards, and to Lady Onslow's extreme annoyance refused him twice. When I finally accepted him, I told him plainly I did not love him, but that he had no rival; it was true, God knows, though I did not tell him why. Perhaps I should have done so, but—I could not bear to speak of that past time. O Clarice, you cannot tell how terrible I appeared to myself! No murderess that ever lay shuddering in the condemned cell could have felt the burden of her guilt more heavily than I did mine. I had sent Herbert Gifford to his death, I who loved him so, and my hand killed him as surely as though it had aimed the matchlock of the enemy who laid him low. Maitland has been a kind husband to me, and we get on well; indeed, I believe we are considered the best-matched pair in the county. I have tried to be a good wife to him, and I do love him, as I would love my father and mother were they alive. I have been true to him in thought and word and deed; I could not be otherwise, were he the most cruel husband that ever lived, instead of the kindest; for, Clarice, I should be faithless to the memory of the dead.'

The soft low voice, one of Ethel Pagot's greatest charms, ceased, and in the dead silence which followed her confession she looked into her young sister's face, and saw that it was wet with tears.

'Why did you tell me this, Ethel? Why did you pain yourself by recalling all this sorrow?'

'For your sake, child—for your sake, my poor little motherless Clarice, that you might be saved remorse like mine. Maurice Vaughan had a look in his face to-night that reminded me of that other—they were not unlike—and then it came into my head to warn you by my own story. O Clarice darling, if nothing but that silly quarrel keep you apart, lay aside your pride—for indeed you have grievously erred—and tell him he need not go. Let me tell

him, if you would rather not ; he will only love and respect you more for it. Will you let me ?

The fire was nearly dead now, and the candles were guttering in their sockets, and out of the gloom came only the sullen answer 'No.'

'Then good-night, my poor little Clarry ; poor, for you have trampled under foot the richest treasure a woman can have offered her—the priceless gift of a good man's love. Stay ; think of what I have said. He goes to-morrow at dawn ; so you will not see him again ; but he will remain in town three days, and I have his address. So, child, if your judgment get the better of your passion, if on reflection you see how foolishly, how wrongly you have acted, say to me "Write," and O, Clarry, how glad I shall be to do it !'

Then she went up to the slight childish figure, swaying it backwards and forwards in the rocking-chair by the fireside, with the tiny bare feet kicking each other, as they used to do when the owner was a wee, wilful, petted child. 'Good-night, and God bless you, Clarry dear ;' and she stooped and kissed the girl's forehead, and stroked her golden hair, but there was no responding word or blessing ; and with a sigh she closed the door after her, and went to her own room.

If Asmodeus had paid a visit to Harley Park that night, he would have found Maitland Paget, Esq., sleeping the sleep of the just, in a most unromantic-looking red-silk nightcap pulled down well over his ears, and—shall I say it ?—snoring horribly, dreaming probably that all his cows were dead of the Rinderpest, or that his early turnips had turned out a dead failure ; blissfully unconscious of his good man, that the fair woman at his side had any care or anxiety more serious than the fit of a new silk dress or solicitude about her baby's last tooth ; never for a moment imagining—how could he ?—as she turned uneasily on her pillow, that the great enchanter, Sleazebottom, had taken her by the hand, and led her into a far-distant land where were great blue mountains and an azure cloudless sky and a dry arid plain, and in the plain a brown mound with a rude wooden cross at the head. No ; if his wife's restlessness happened to disturb him, the worthy squire probably attributed it to the Nessel pudding, or the cheese *soufflet*, or some other obvious material cause.

And he would have found, at an hour when such an unexceptionably respectable household is usually wrapped in slumber, a bronzed, ruddy, bearded man in the midst of open portmanteaus and half-filled carpet-bags, which, scorning the aid of a valet—indeed, such an individual would have been a very white elephant to Major—he packed himself, cramming-in the things anyhow, bringing the weight of his ponderous frame to bear on refractory lids, every now and then pausing in the midst of his work to sit impatiently up and down the room, finding vent for his feelings



Arthur Lumley, del

W. A. Cranford

"NOT LOVE HIM! ... O MAURICE!"

series of expletives which, taking into consideration the man and the circumstances, the attendant recording angel must in very charity have blotted out as surely as he did the oath of 'my uncle Toby.'

And in 'my lady's chamber'—a pretty little room hung with pink and white, with sundry proofs of feminine occupation littering floor and table, with the gray light of early dawn creeping in through the shuttered windows—he would have found a young girl rocking herself backwards and forwards in a chair by the now comfortless hearth, with dishevelled hair and great dark circles under her blue eyes, rocking herself to and fro in the very attitude of woe, clasping and unclasping her tiny fingers, and sobbing pitifully to herself the while, 'Not love him! Not know what love is! O Maurice, Maurice!'

And presently came the rattle of wheels driving swiftly down the avenue, with a dreary hopeless sound in their motion; and then the great clock on the staircase took up the tale, and, with the wondrous vitality with which inanimate things appear on occasion to be gifted, seemed to the ears of the weary little watcher to say, 'Too late, too late, too late!'

Love and pride had had a sore tussle that night in the little chamber which should have been sacred to pleasant dreams and sweet joyous fancies of love and youth, not desecrated by such unseemly fray; and alas, alas, as is too frequently the case, pride had gained the mastery!

CHAPTER II.

'THE END I COULD NOT KNOW.'

EARLY that morning, before any of the other members of the household were awake, Clarice left her seat, and weary, sick at heart, cramped in every limb, rose, and going to the mirror, started back at the reflection of her own face. Could that worn haggard-looking woman, with pale cheeks and sunken eyes, be the pretty, bright, thoughtless Clarry of twelve hours before? She remembers now how she used to marvel how the hair of her favourite heroine, poor Mary Stuart, could have become gray in one night. She no longer wondered, and found herself, half mechanically, looking at her own bright tresses, to see if maybe a thread or two of silver had crept in to mar their beauty; but the locks that poor Maurice had so often praised were still yellow as virgin gold. She pushed the wavy mass wearily back from her brow, and with trembling fingers twisted it into a great burnished coil round her aching little head. The father of evil never put a worse idea into a woman's head than that of putting the chignon monstrosity on it), a great, genuine, golden rope, without a hair in it that did not grow on the wearer's own head; then she put on her riding-habit, and leaving the room

softly—for she would not for worlds have had the sharp eyes of her maid on her just then—stole out to the stables, and finding a sleepy helper yawning over his work, desired him to put the saddle on her favourite hunter, Hotspur. The lad stared, and suggested that the horse had not been ridden for a week, and would be consequently perhaps, rather more than she could manage.

'Quick,' she said impatiently; 'do as you are told.'

The groom obeyed, open-mouthed with astonishment at the new freak of his young mistress's; and soon Hotspur, a splendid chestnut, snorting and plunging, and looking most unfit for a lady to ride, was brought out. Clarice sprang lightly into the saddle, and giving the animal a sharp tap of her whip, which he resented by a series of kicks which would have speedily unseated a less-experienced rider, turned his head in the direction of a long stretch of common which lay to the right of the park, and rode off at a sham canter, the groom standing staring after her.

'She be a wild un, she be,' he said, scratching his sandy head and chewing a straw.

Clarice had always been passionately fond of riding, and when quite a child her father had bought for her a pony called Black Peter, which, with the services of a steady gray-haired old groom, was placed entirely at her disposal. Whenever the little lady felt herself out of temper, which was not infrequent, she would order this pony to be brought round, and, with old Thomas at her heel, would scamper all over the country; and the old man used to declare he always knew when 'misay' had been 'extra rampagious,' by the pace she went. This habit she had laid aside with other childish ones—not all though, I'm afraid—and to-day for the first time resumed.

On she went, the great horse flying like the wind, and taking hedge and ditch in his stride, his little mistress sitting firm as a rock in her saddle, with knitted brow and compressed lips. Onwards towards the common they flew at well-nigh racing speed, the astonished peasants looking up from their work as they passed. One labourer, thinking, and not unnaturally, that the horse was running away, threw up his arms and darted forward in a well-meant attempt to stop him. To show the man that he was mistaken in his conclusions, and that she had still perfect control over her horse, Clarice foolishly slackened her pace, and raising her whip, gave the animal a smart cut with it on the flank, which was more than her naturally hot-tempered beast, would stand; he kicked out violently in the middle of his canter; and how it happened his rider could never determine, but in another second she found herself lying on the ground, with sundry bruises and scratches on her face and hands, but without other apparent injury; while the traitorous Hotspur, with flowing tail and hanging bridle, was beheld galloping home.

the distance. The labourer who had been the indirect cause of the mishap hurried to the spot; he was rather surprised to find the young lady so little hurt, and suggested that she should rest in his cottage close by, while he went up to the 'big 'ouse' to inform the squire of her misfortune. But this Clarice would not hear of; she was not going to have all the masculine occupants of the park coming to her rescue, as would, she knew, be the case were Luke Holmster to do as he proposed; so she despatched him instead to a farmhouse a quarter of a mile off, with a request that Farmer Eames would lend her his tax-cart to convey her home. Mr. Eames shortly appeared with the vehicle in question, and in half an hour they were driving into Harley Park by one gate, just in time to see a party of equestrians leaving it by the other. A groom presently appeared leading off the truant chestnut; so Clarice, speedily divining how matters stood, jumped off the cart, and rushing into the house and up-stairs to her sister's room, there found poor Ethel weeping bitterly for the fate of the girl who had been a perpetual source of trouble and anxiety to her ever since she had come to the park, but who was very dear to her withal.

'Ethie, Ethie dear,' said the delinquent, 'it's all right; I'm not dead, though I ought to be, but I'm bruised all over; and look here'—in a piteous tone—'my new habit all torn to ribbons!' holding up with a small muddy hand the mangled remains of one of Poole's *chefs-d'œuvre*.

'Never mind the habit, we'll soon get you another; but O, you wicked, wicked child!'—a kiss at each adjective—'how could you go galloping off on that dreadful horse without telling any one? Maitland is awfully angry, and the chestnut's to be sold, and—and—O Clarice darling, how thankful I am you're safe! But what possessed you to do it?'

'Well, Ethie dear, when I was quite a little girl, whenever I was in a bad temper or vexed about anything, I used to mount my pony (poor old Peter, he died before you were married), and ride as fast as I could go for miles, with old Thomas Benson wheezing and swearing inaudibly behind me. Somehow I always returned good; the motion, or the air, or something, had a soothing effect on me, as music had on Saul, or a hairbrush on Lord Byron; and to-day—'

'To-day you felt you had been a naughty child, and wanted to be a good one; was that it, little Clarry?'

'O Ethel, my darling sister, I'm so dreadfully sorry! Ethel dear, when I felt myself falling, I thought I should be killed; and then in an instant all I had done seemed to come before me, and I felt how wicked I had been; and, darling, I thought would *he* be sorry when he heard that—'

And the poor little thing burst into a flood of tears. Ethel took off the torn habit, and laid the little figure, still sobbing, on

her bed; she thought it wiser to say nothing more then. At Clarice's request she left the room to get her a cup of tea, that feminine specific for every woe; and on her return found the tired girl, doubly exhausted by fright and the previous night's loss of rest, sleeping soundly. She drew the curtains gently, darkened the room, and then went down-stairs to square matters with the squire, who was, as she had said, terribly angry—angry with Clarice for having played one of her mad pranks, as he called it, and with the groom for not having told of it; his wife even came in for a share of his wrath for not keeping his sister in better order, and letting her have 'a great deal too much of her own way, by George. So altogether poor Ethel found she had undertaken a difficult task and it was only by repeated promises of ameliorated behaviour on behalf of his sister (she had already stood sponsor for Clarice more than once, and generally found that she had reckoned without her host) that she managed to appease her indignant lord.

'I tell you what it is,' he said sharply, 'you may give her my compliments, and tell her that unless she mends her ways in more than one particular she'll remain Miss Paget to the end of the chapter; it's my belief that fine fellow Vaughan would have proposed for her if he had not been warned what a confounded little jilt and madcap she is. Do you hear me, Ethel? I believe he would. She'll be an old maid; and we've never had any old maids in the family. Mrs. Paget, go and tell her so!'

And poor Ethel was only too thankful to make her escape; for Clarice's misdeeds with regard to the Major had been studiously concealed from the squire, or great would have been his wrath.

Clarice slept on till late in the day, and when she awoke she was so bruised and stiff from the effects of her fall, that she could not do more than exchange her sister's bed for her own. She looked very grave and sad, poor child; but Ethel preferred to let her of herself approach the subject which was uppermost in both their minds. However, she appeared carefully to avoid all reference to yesterday's events.

After dinner, as Ethel was sitting by the fire in Clarice's room looking dreamily into the embers, and thinking the thoughts which at such times often like very angel's footsteps tread softly through our brains, her reverie, half pleasant, half mournful, was broken by a voice from the bed: 'Come here, Ethel; I want you.'

'Why, Clarice love, I thought you were asleep; you were so still.'

'No, dear; I was only thinking. Ethie, I feel as if I should never sleep again until— Ethie, I want you to—write.'

'What shall I write, little one?'

'Don't tease; you know what I mean. Stay, I will do it myself; that will be best. Bring me my writing-case; it's there on that little table.'

And with a restless feverish little hand she wrote :

'Harley Park, Hants, April 25.

'Dear Maurice,—I am sorry. Come back.—Yours,

'CLARICE PAGET.'

'There, seal it up and post it as soon as you can, or perhaps I shall repent,' she said laughingly, as she handed the missive to her sister, and watched her pleased face as she read it. 'Good-night, Ethel; I shall sleep now.'

The next day she felt quite recovered, but preferred remaining in her own room, and to her great relief the guests all took their departures. It was impossible for the charades to take place with Gulnare's face covered with scratches; and, moreover, they felt themselves rather in the way, Mrs. Paget not being ubiquitous. I believe Clarice—cunning little puss—had plotted to this end; for when the last carriage had driven away, she revived amazingly, dressed, and went down-stairs. She was very humble; begged the squire's pardon, and promised to be very good for the future; played with the children, and even (and it was a triumph of temper) refrained from slapping Master Tommy's fat cheeks when he made a hideous grimace at her and said, 'Who kissed Harry Percy in the arbour?'—a breach of decorum to which the little wretch, eating a stolen jam-tart on the sly, had been a delighted witness.

Next day she was still better, and fairly took the squire's breath away by actually sallying forth with a basket on her arm, to the relief of sundry old women in the neighbourhood; which act of Christian charity on the part of Miss Seymour and other of her acquaintances had formerly called forth her undisguised contempt, she having ascribed to those female Samaritans the ulterior and unworthy motive of 'wishing to catch the curate.'

The third day she went singing and dancing all over the house, and at six o'clock, half an hour before the mail-train was due, sat herself down at a window overlooking the park, so that she might be the first to see her lover, or at least to hear the sound of his chariot-wheels afar off, so confident was she that her summons would be answered in person. But the hour passed, and the dinner-bell rang, and still the Major came not. She sat down and vainly tried to eat, but every morsel seemed to choke her; she grew pale and red by turns, and finally burst into a fit of hysterical crying.

'Dear me,' said the squire, who was quite unaccustomed to emotional displays of that description on the part of his womenkind, 'she hasn't recovered that fall yet. We must have Dr. Stephens over to-morrow, Ethel.'

Then Ethel, who knew too well what was the matter, led her away, and tried vainly to soothe her. Only one word did the poor child say: 'Ethel, did you post it? Are you sure you did?'

Yes, she had posted it with her own hands; there could be no doubt on that head; so all she could say was, 'Perhaps he has missed the train, and would come to-morrow.' But to-morrow came, and the next day, and the next, and he came not; nor did the post bring any answer to that pitiful little letter. And then they read in the *Times* that the good ship *Aurora*, outward bound, with passengers and cargo for Montreal, had sailed from Liverpool on the 30th inst., and in the list of her passengers was the name of Major Maurice Vaughan. Ethel saw the announcement, and broke it tenderly and lovingly to her sister; but the blow fell heavily. For herself she felt hurt and angry and disappointed with Vaughan, first for humbling Clarice as he had done; for it was very humiliating for a Paget to have to confess herself in the wrong, and solicit a renewal of his suit from the man she had refused, only to have her letter accounted unworthy of even an acknowledgment; secondly, he had made her, Ethel, an unwitting accomplice in the matter, and she almost hated him for it. Poor Clarice was more merciful.

'He never got it. I know he never got it,' she said. 'It is my own fault; I have deserved it all.'

She was brave, this little girl, and she came of an old stock, an *noblesse oblige*; so after the first burst of sorrow she accepted her burden unflinchingly, and set herself to carry it as long as her life should last, as many another of her sex has done. In society she was as pleasant as ever, as much sought after; but all her old flirting coquettish ways were laid aside, and people began to see that there was after all no harm in Clarice Paget, and that they had always maintained (as when did the world not prophesy truly?) that she would steady down as she grew older, and some day—well, knows?—be a pattern wife and mother in the county. And so indeed, some of the county gentlemen seemed to think; for in one week Clarice had her choice of Lord Wendover, with a rent-roll of 15,000*l.* a year, and Sir Everard Holme, the owner of Matchingham Priory, a house in Portman-square, and all that the most ambitious spinster could desire. But earl or commoner would she none, as the squire marvelled much thereat, though he was the last person in the world to force her inclination in such matters.

'The family tree will have to bear the disgrace of one old maid on its branches,' the poor thing said to Ethel with a sad smile, at a face that was enough to melt a heart of stone, as Lord Wendover rode crestfallen away.

Those few weeks wrought a marvellous change in the girl's character, and none but Ethel knew through how great suffering it was brought about. She was very patient, gentle, and uncomplaining, but she suffered none the less; and as week after week went by she grew paler and thinner. And yet before every one but Ethel the brave young spirit battled and struggled hard against the load

that was weighing it down. Only once was she near betraying herself in public. A number of people were dining at Harley Park, and after dinner, as usual, Clarice was asked to sing. Several gentlemen were standing round the piano, and she was turning over some music to select from, when suddenly Miss Seymour took a song from an open portfolio, and, placing it on the music-rest, said: 'Clarry, I want you to sing this; I have not heard it since the night before Major Vaughan left, when you sang it so well, and we all cried. Don't you remember?'

Poor Clarice raised her eyes, and there before her was the song that had cut Maurice to the quick, the song to which he had listened, Ethel had told her, with mute agony in his face. Remember? Was she ever likely to forget? Had Miss Seymour suspected anything, and done this on purpose? She was capable of it. Well, she should be disappointed in her object. And playing the prelude with a firm hand, she sang steadily through the first two verses; sang as she had never sung before, so determined was she to thwart her enemy. But when she came to the words,

'Thou didst set thy foot on the ship, and sail,'

the sweet voice began to tremble, and tears half rose to her eyes; but with a desperate effort she controlled herself, for she felt that the wicked little greenish-gray eyes of Miss Seymour were upon her, and throwing her whole soul into the words—ah, how she felt their meaning now!—went on bravely to the end. The next time she was asked for that song, which appeared to be a favourite in the house, she said she was sorry she could not sing it; it did not suit her voice, and she had given it away. Given it away? When it was lying at the bottom of the drawer in which she kept her most cherished treasures—her mother's picture and a tiny curl of hair of her dead baby sister's; lying with a faded rose that he had given her, between the leaves, and two or three stains on the pages that looked marvellously like tears. Poor Clarice! Poor little story-teller!

Some days after they were sitting round the breakfast-table, when the post-bag was brought in, opened by the squire, and its contents distributed among the respective owners. There were one or two letters for Mrs. Puget, an official-looking document for Clarice, and the *Times* for the squire.

'Why, Clarry child,' he said, as he tossed the letter to her across the table, 'who on earth is that from? Are you to be created a baroness in your own right, and is this your patent of nobility? Or have you been entering into any political conspiracy that authorises you to receive such formidable documents?'

Quickly she broke the seal, and opened the envelope, and there inside was her poor little letter, returned to her with an intimation from the Postmaster-General that, having slipped, as letters sometimes do, between the folds of a newspaper, it had consequently been

forwarded to a remote place, some town in Russia with an unpronounceable name; that the receiver had returned it to the postal authorities; and finally, Major Vaughan's address being unknown, it had reached the Returned-Letter Office, and was herewith enclosed to the sender. Matter to this effect expressed in terse official language. And her letter, intended for *his* eyes alone, had been scanned by rude unsympathising men, and ridiculed by vulgar post-office clerks. Poor Clarice had a very hazy idea of the working of that important branch of her Majesty's service in St. Martin's-le-Grand, and little knew of what very small interest her epistle would be to any one but herself and one other.

'Well,' said the squire, eyeing her curiously over his spectacles 'what is it?'

'Nothing, Maitland; at least nothing of any importance—only a returned letter.'

And she crushed it in her hand and bent over her plate to hide her confusion. Ah, there was hope for her yet! He had not received it; she always knew he had not. Ethel would write to him, would manage it all; kind Ethel, who always knew how best to act.

'Returned letter, indeed! I should like to know who you wrote that—' Then stopping short, as his eye caught a paragraph in the newspaper, he said sharply, 'Ethel, what ship did Vaughan sail by?'

'The Aurora,' she answered; 'why do you ask?'

'My God,' he cried, 'listen to this!' And he read out hastily all unconscious in his excitement of the gray stony face with dilated eyes and parted ashen lips that stared at him as he read: "'Our readers may remember that doubts were expressed by the undersigned writers, Messrs. Smythe, Allwood, & Co., as to the safety of the sailing vessel Aurora, which, with numerous passengers and a valuable cargo, left this port for Montreal on the 30th April last. We regret to state that their fears have met with the fullest confirmation the unfortunate vessel having foundered at sea on or about 15th May, with every soul on board"' (*Liverpool Mercury*). Poor Vaughan!" said the squire. 'I am as grieved as if he had been my own brother. Why, Ethel! Clarice!' and he sprang forward in time to catch his sister as she fell heavily from her chair to the floor. He turned indignantly to his wife: 'Ethel, was there any thing between them? Answer me.'

'There was,' she answered, through her sobs.

'Then, in the name of all that's righteous, why was I not told? Would I have blurted it out in that unfeeling manner, had I even an inkling how matters stood? You've killed her, Ethel; that's what you've done!'

And in all her life Ethel had never seen the squire look so angry, or so pitiful, as he did then. They raised the poor young thing, and carried her—she was a light burden—to her room; she

soon recovered from the swoon, and when she opened her eyes, the squire was sitting beside her, stroking her hand.

‘Is it true?’ she asked faintly.

I don’t think Mr. Paget had shed a tear for many a long day, he was of a very undemonstrative disposition; but now the big drops coursed down his ruddy cheeks and trickled on to his brown hands as he answered:

‘Ay, it’s true enough, poor little Clarry! A good man has gone to his rest. I was a big blundering fool, a d—d ass, and be hanged to me! But, Clarry dear, you might have told me. I know I’ve been rather hard on you, little one, once or twice, but it will be different now: we will be very good to you, my poor little sister.’

And the squire bethought himself whether he had indeed fulfilled the trust reposed in him by Clarice’s dead mother (she was only his half sister). He *had* been hard with her, as he said, and she was afraid of him; he sometimes forgot that she was little more than a child, and that he must not expect to find old heads on young shoulders. He was nearly old enough to be her father, and there had been little sympathy or confidence between them; his heart smote him, for he felt it was his own fault that there had not been more. Then tears came to her relief, and hand in hand the brother and sister sat, weeping for the good man and true who lay taking his rest beneath the waters of the great Atlantic, till such time as the sea should give up her dead.

Maurice Vaughan was mourned in that house as never man was mourned. Even the very servants, for whom he had always a kindly word and pleasant smile, grieved for him; and somehow it soon became known that there was one in that stately home who had a better right to grieve than they. She could wear no outward garb of woe, poor little Clarice; she could not parade her grief in the depth of the crape on her skirt or the number of bugles on her bonnet, which I believe affords a certain species of consolation to some bereaved ones; but a desolating blight seemed to have fallen on her young life. She tried to take up her cross bravely; but it was a sorry load for such young shoulders, all unaccustomed as they were to any save the lightest and easiest of burdens.

‘If he had *only* heard, if he had *only* known,’ she said to her sister, ‘then I could have borne it; but—’

And then the words of the song so lightly sung, so terribly brought home to her, rang hopelessly in her ears:

‘Is there never a chink in the world above
Where they listen for words from below?’

Never a chink, spite of what spiritualists say; never a chink? Never an opportunity of recalling the cruel words, the thoughtless mocking jest, when once the ears that were pained by them are

sealed for ever? Never a chink, though we would sometimes give half our lives if there were?

She was sitting in the drawing-room, shivering, though it was a warm summer evening, with a shawl wrapped round her poor shrunken little figure; the book she had been listlessly trying to read had fallen from her hand, and she sat looking vacantly into the dusk, thinking wearily, as she often did now, wishing that terrible wish which only comes to us in our extremity—and God help us when it does come!—that she might die, and be at rest.

'Only nineteen,' she moaned, 'and a lifetime of misery to be lived through. O God, let me die! Let me see him in another world, and tell him that I loved him!'

The squire and Ethel had gone to a fête in the neighbourhood, leaving her, as she had prayed to be left, alone—alone with her sorrow. Presently she heard the sound of wheels rattling up the avenue; they had come back, then, earlier than they had intended, and she must go and dress for dinner. She wrapped her shawl closer around her, and stooped to pick up the fallen volume. What was she always so cold, when others were complaining of the heat? Was it that her very heart was frozen within her? Was she dying? Ah, no! people only died of broken hearts in novels, never in real life. She would live to be an old, old woman, an old maid like Miss Everett of the Grange, who, they said, had been disappointed in love; and she would try to be kind and good to others, especially to young girls, and would warn them by her own example, as Ethel had tried to warn her. Ah, but warning is so seldom successful. When folks are young they refuse to learn wisdom save by their own experience; and then sorrow is the portion of the old, the faded, the broken-down, not the inheritance of the young, the beautiful, the hopeful—or so, at least, says youth. So many more dinners to be eaten, so many more summers to be lived through, perhaps thirty, forty, fifty—she was only nineteen—before she could earn the only reward she looked for, rest. No more happiness on earth, no more—The door softly opens; who comes out of the shadow? Not the squire, he has no beard, and, besides, the figure is too tall. Not the curate, who is expected to dinner. Pshaw, the curate is a poor thin overworked little man, who, as Artemus Ward says, 'would have to borrow an overcoat to make a shadow.' No overcoat required here! Not the doctor. Yes, it was a doctor, the physician whose specialty it was to cure that poor wounded little heart. Not—And with a great cry she springs forward and is folded to the stranger's breast.

'Maurice! my Maurice! Thank God the sea has given up her dead!'

No more cold; no more need of the shawl here; fling it away!

There are some scenes with which not even a novelist has the right to meddle ; there are some meetings, ay and some partings, so sacred that they are best described by an hiatus ; so be it with the present one. The Aurora, with all her goodly freight of human souls, had indeed gone down to the bottom of the sea ; wives had lost their husbands, mothers their sons, other girls their lovers, but *he* was saved. Saved by no miracle, by no special interposition of Providence which rescued him alone from the doomed vessel, leaving others to their fate, but by an ordinary coincidence enough. Vaughan had secured his berth in the Aurora, and had even sent some of his heavy baggage on board, when by a fortunate chance he met an old college chum, who was meditating a cruise in his yacht, the Mistletoe. He pressed Vaughan to accompany him, and Maurice, little caring where he went, provided it were out of England, readily agreed. He waited in London until the three days before mentioned had expired, and then, finding no letter to bid him stay, packed up his things and set off with his friend. They had made a long trip, and part of the time Vaughan had been dangerously ill from the effects of a ducking he had had in rescuing one of his companions from drowning. Until his arrival in London the day before he had heard nothing of the loss of the Aurora, their English papers having, many of them, failed to reach them. Fortunately, after the vessel sailed, he had written to his Canadian friends by the mail steamer, telling them of the change in his plans ; so their minds were at rest about him. But he was greatly concerned to find that, owing to neglect in not striking off his name from the list of passengers, all his English acquaintances believed he had gone down with the ill-fated ship ; he therefore took an early opportunity of running down to Harley Park to apprise his old friends (Mr. Paget's father had been his guardian) of his safety.

I don't know whether Clarice ever confessed to him how great her repentance had been, how sorely she had mourned for him. Some young ladies are reticent in the expression of their real sentiments towards their lovers, or are afraid of making themselves too cheap ; which is it ?), but I think she must have told him a good deal ; for not very long afterwards, when Major and Mrs. Vaughan were walking home from church one Sunday morning, with old Miss Everett stalking stilly on in front of them, in a poke bonnet and a dress innocent of crinoline, the Major turned to his pretty little wife with a mischievous smile, and said, with a comical grimace at the ungainly figure before them :

'Clarice, did you really ever expect to rival that ?'

She looked up at him with a loving smile, and said softly :

'Don't laugh at her, poor old thing ! *She* has suffered all her life.'

And as Maurice looked at the trusting little figure by his side,

he mentally resolved that so far as with him lay sorrow should dim those sweet bright eyes no more.

Among the few old childish treasures which Clarice Vaughan took with her across the ocean to her husband's home was a song with a faded rose between the leaves, and the trace of tears on its pages; a song which perhaps, some day in the years to come, she will show to another fair young girl with her hair and eyes, when she tells her the story of how 'the sea gave up her dead.'

MORNING

WHEN lovely Aurora awakes from her sleep,
And doffs the dark shadows of night,
She joyously smiles on the face of the deep,
And bathes the green vales in her light.

The lark and the linnet start up from the brake,
The throstle and finch from the thorn,
To pour forth on wing sweet libations of praise,
And welcome the first blush of morn.

The fairy harebell and the violet blue
Uprear their small delicate heads;
And daffodile, wet with the diamond dew,
Peep out from their green mossy beds.

How sweet is the air of the soft balmy breeze,
Just warm'd by the beams of the sun,
And stroked by the butterfly's gaudy spread wing,
Whose ephem'ral life has begun!

O man! then remember that morn's like thy prime,
Which ne'er will return to thee more;
Thy life's but a drop in the ocean of time,
That bears thee to death's dreary shore.

AUGUSTINE BRIGGS, B.A.

THE POSTAL TELEGRAPH, THE PRESS, AND RACE MEETINGS

The development of the Postal Telegraph is a matter of public notoriety and universal interest; but this admirable reform was not effected without considerable difficulty. It was a sweeping and radical change; and in carrying it out it was scarcely possible for Post-Office authorities to avoid giving some dissatisfaction to certain classes of the community.

The Telegraph Companies declared in 1868 that their lines were used mainly by 'stockbrokers, mining agents, shipbrokers, colonial agents, racing and betting men, fishmongers, fruit-merchants, and persons engaged in business of a speculative character, or who deal in articles of a perishable nature,' and that comparatively little use was made of the telegraph by what they termed 'general merchants.'

Doubtless this view of the matter was accurate enough; for, by maintaining high charges as long as they could, by reducing those charges inch by inch, as it were, and only under pressure, by the importance of their operations to important towns, and by planting their offices mainly in the business centres of those towns, the Telegraph Companies had brought speculative men, and speculative men only, to a common use of the telegraph.

He who could make money on a turn of the market, or could advantageously place a few pounds when Bumblebee went below the bell in the betting, or he who had it at heart to let Thames-street know that there was a large take of herrings at Wick, would cheerfully go to the telegraph office, and would have submitted to any inconvenience, and paid any charge, to get his message through in time. But the general public, puzzled by a variable and complex tariff, and disheartened by the distance of the telegraph offices from their doors, had got to regard the telegraph as a medium of communication which they might use in times of sore necessity, and then only, and to look upon a telegraph message with a feeling amounting to fear.

But a radical change in this respect was contemplated in the transfer of the telegraphs to the Government. By the establishment of a low, uniform, and very simple tariff, and by bringing the wires nearer to the populations, it was proposed and intended to popularise telegraphs in this country—to put the use of the telegraph within the reach of every one, and to make that which had hitherto mainly served the purposes of the wealthy and the speculative minister to the necessities of social and domestic life.

The Post Office resolved to set itself resolutely against favouritism of any kind, and determined to forward messages strictly in the order of their reception, and without any reference to their real or supposed importance, or to the wishes of the senders—messages on behalf of the Government being the only exception to this rule. Applications were made to the Post Office for the establishment of a 'differential tariff,' that is, with a low rate for ordinary and a high rate for special messages; but it is clear that no such differential tariff is admissible. If it were once admitted that a message called special, and on which 5*s.* were paid, ought to go before a message called ordinary, and on which but 1*s.* was paid, then it would be impossible to contend that a message on which a guinea was paid should not have priority over a message on which 5*s.* were paid. If the principle of strict rotation were once abandoned, the chief use of the telegraph would fall to the rich, or to those whose wants, for the time being, made them as lavish as the rich.

No doubt this resolution has not been satisfactory to certain persons, but complaints of this kind are only like those which have attended other reforms generally beneficial. It will be remembered that when the penny postage was first introduced, many men of business complained that they gained nothing by the change, but rather lost by it. They said that no doubt the previous charges had been high, but that the burden had not fallen on themselves, because they had for the most part charged their customers a lump sum annually for postage, which had saved them from loss, if indeed it had left them a profit. Something of the same kind happened with regard to the telegraphs, the transfer being intended to benefit the community generally; but for a time, and only for a short time, could not avoid injuring a class, which doubtless is now ready to acknowledge that, on the whole, it has derived benefit.

The uniform shilling rate now applies to all the telegraph lines in the United Kingdom, the lines to Scilly and the lines to Orkney and Shetland excepted; but sooner or later these lines will have to be brought into the Government scheme.

From a carefully-prepared account which was taken of the produce of all the messages in one week, it appears that the average cost to the public of an *inland* message is between 1*s.* 1*d.* and 1*s.* 1½*d.* It has been ascertained that the corresponding average cost to the public prior to the transfer was 1*s.* 7*d.*; so that the average cost, to those who used the telegraph prior to the transfer, of an inland message has been reduced by nearly *one-third*. In addition to this, however, it must be stated, that the average cost prior to the transfer would not have been so low as 1*s.* 7*d.* if the high rates for long distances had not kept down the number of messages liable to such rates.

The reduction in the average on the new system is partly attri-

butable to the substitution of a uniform rate for all the formerly prevailing rates, and partly to the extension of the wires by which the charges for portage have been reduced.

Great as have been the exertions of the Post Office, nothing less would have sufficed to enable it to keep pace with the growth of business. In the very first week after the transfer the number of messages—exclusive of news messages—forwarded from all stations was 128,872; in the week ending 31st March the number had risen to 160,775; and so it went on; so that the average number in thirteen weeks, to the 31st December 1870, was 203,572. In the week ending on the 31st December, which is usually considered the worst week in the year for telegraphic work, the number was 144,041, or nearly 16,000 messages in excess of the number with which the Post Office started. The total number of messages, excluding all press and news telegrams, forwarded by the Post Office in the year 1873 was (calculated to the nearest thousand) 17,346,000, showing an increase of about seventeen per cent on the total number sent during the preceding year. The number of messages sent during one week of the month of December 1874 was 348,313, being an increase of 16,327 over the messages of the corresponding week in 1873.

Of course nothing can be more important than the connection between the press and newswork of the postal telegraph. The interested parties in this matter required and expected to obtain considerable advantages by the transfer of the telegraphs to the Government. They desired to have freedom of collection of news, with low rates for its transmission, no matter for what or how many agencies it was transmitted. Under the old Companies the arrangements for collecting news for the press were most unsatisfactory, as the members thereof were obliged to be content with whatever news the Companies thought fit to supply, inasmuch as, although rivals to one another as far as ordinary messages were concerned, the Companies became allied in relation to the collection and transmission of news for the press; and thus being possessed of a monopoly of all the telegraph wires in the kingdom, the newspaper proprietors could not do otherwise than submit. The Postal arrangements for collecting and transmitting press news, as enacted by clause 16 of the Telegraph Act in 1868, were therefore productive of the most favourable results, and seem, as far as ordinary observation is qualified to judge, to have conduced to a greatly-extended distribution of news throughout the country.

The two principal associations at present for the collection and supply of news are the Press Association and the Central Press; and the Post Office, in accordance with the provisions of the Act just referred to, must transmit the news collected by them, or by any others which may be hereafter formed, on equal terms; for, it

must be remembered, the collection of news is open to all, and equal facilities for its transmission are secured to all who collect it.

The Postal news arrangements have, as we have said, shown most favourable results. Whilst the Telegraphic Companies (of old) sent news to only 144 towns in the United Kingdom, the Post Office, acting on behalf of the before-mentioned associations, sends it to 365 towns.

The difference is strikingly shown by the following summary. The Companies sent direct to 28 towns; the Post Office sends to 66. The Companies sent with one retransmission to 81 towns; the Post Office sends to 224; and so on; doubling or distancing even to the fourth transmission, which the Companies never reached, so that the total was for the Companies, 144 towns, to 365 towns of the Post-Office transmission.

But that is not all. In the 144 towns to which the Companies sent news, there were only 306 subscribers for news; but in the 365 towns to which the Post Office sends news there are 1100 subscribers for news. Thus there is an increase of 221 in the number of towns to which news is sent; an increase of 800 in the total number of subscribers for news; and an increase of 294 in the number of newspapers taking news.

Moreover, there is a vast increase in the quantity of news transmitted.

The Companies sent, during the Session of Parliament, nearly 6000 words of news daily; during the remainder of the year they sent nearly 4000 words daily. The Post Office sends, during the Session of Parliament, on behalf of the associations before named, 20,000 words of news daily; and during the remainder of the year it sends, on their behalf, nearly 15,000 words daily. The astounding increase in the transmission of news for the press by the Post Office may be farther illustrated by the fact that the actual total number of words forwarded in 1873 amounted to more than 214,000,000. In one night alone of that year, when an unusual number of events were reported from various parts of the country upwards of 300,000 words, or about 150 columns of the *Times* were transmitted from the Central Telegraph Office in London.

It may also be added, that this great increase of press business on the part of the Post Office has been accompanied by an increase of revenue, which is calculated as being, in 1873, 10,000*l*.

Nor is that all the advantage of the transfer. News was and is collected for newspapers by their own ordinary correspondents in town and in the country. Now, the Companies charged the newspapers half-rates for the transmission of news from their correspondents, but only those newspaper proprietors who were subscribers for the news collected and supplied by the Intelligence Department of the Companies. All other newspaper proprietors were charged

full rates. The Telegraph Act of 1868 fixed the Post-Office charges at a much lower rate, namely, one shilling for 100 words night rate, and one shilling for 75 words day rate.

The quantity of news formerly transmitted by ordinary newspaper correspondents is not known; but at present they hand-in from 15,000 to 20,000 words daily for transmission.

Formerly the Companies supplied the London newspaper proprietors with passes, which enabled their correspondents to send their messages without prepayment, the charges being reclaimed in a monthly account. The Companies would not extend this accommodation to the provincial press; but the Post Office has done so, and it is now enjoyed by the correspondents of sixty-four newspapers and seven news associations.

Seven newspaper proprietors rented special wires for night work of the Companies; and the same number of wires is rented by them from the Post Office. They have all gained in this respect—that whereas they paid the Companies a rate ranging, according to distance, from 750*l.* to 1000*l.* per annum, they only pay the Post Office a uniform rate of 500*l.* per annum. There can be no doubt that by this time many other newspaper proprietors have taken wires; for it seems that it is only the deficiency of wires which arrests the extension of the more moderate accommodation supplied by the Post Office. It seems pretty certain that the Post Office will obtain a largely-increased rental from this source as soon as its additional wires have been erected.

On a single day there were sent over the special wires of the

Edinburgh Daily Review	7,823 words.
Courant	9,582 "
Scotsman	8,300 "
Glasgow Herald	11,043 "
Daily Mail	5,213 "
Dublin Irish Times	9,377 "

A very large portion of every leading provincial newspaper now consists of news received by telegraph. Mr. Scudamore says that he has seen as many as twelve columns of telegraphic news in leading provincial papers, and that he has read, in a local paper at Aberdeen, several columns of news which, if Aberdeen had been dependent upon London papers for its news, could not have been known there until six-and-thirty hours afterwards.

Taking advantage of this ready and cheap accommodation, the Manchester and other journals employ London agents to send them very long morning expresses for their second 'editions.'

Turning to another subject—the race meetings—very striking results are found recorded.

The telegraphic business done at and in connection with race meetings is large and lucrative, but, unfortunately for the Post-Office

officials, rather troublesome special arrangements have to be made for every meeting. The work has to be done under great pressure. The senders of the messages are more irritable; and when they are irritated they are more free in the use of their tongues than any other class of the community. And yet it appears that the Post Office officials have, on the whole, contrived to give them satisfaction—not, however, without considerable ability and zeal on the part of the subordinates who superintended the arrangements of great meetings. The enormous extent of business done at these meetings may be gathered from the statement that in the year 1879, 370,000 ordinary messages and 7,000,000 words of news for the press were transmitted in connection with them; while the income derived from this source was more than 20,000*l.*, showing an increase of more than twenty-five per cent on that of the previous year.

As a matter of course, Newmarket heads the return, showing as it does, a number of messages equal to nearly one-third of the total number for the whole country. One or two circumstances connected with the disposal of this large amount of work cannot fail to be interesting.

At the earlier meetings of the year a return was kept of the average delay on forwarded messages, from which it was proved that the work was done in something like half the time taken by the Companies, notwithstanding the immense increase of business (nearly double), and without any corresponding increase of facilities. Indeed, it was rather the other way; for, while the officials used precisely the same 'circuits,' or connected wires, as those used by the Companies, the business was done at *one* town office as compared with *two* under the old system.

The outside delay on any message was under half an hour, which simply represented the time occupied in transmitting the press messages, while the great majority of ordinary messages got off in five minutes and under.

Newmarket, besides showing the heaviest business in the aggregate, also furnishes the largest result from any single meeting, namely, the Cambridgeshire week in the year 1879, when upwards of 8000 messages were disposed of.

In the fifteen days of the October meetings there were, in round numbers, 20,000 messages forwarded and received; and of these upwards of 2000 were long press messages, containing 120,000 words.

Large as are these figures, they become still larger when borne in mind that the bulk of this work was performed on the racing days of the race days, between 10 A.M. and 1 P.M.; and in the evening after 8 P.M. During the Cesarewitch week, for instance, Cesarewitch day gave nearly 1000 messages at the town-office,

tween 10 A.M. and 1 P.M.; on the following day, 800 between 10 A.M. and noon; and on the third day, 700 between 10 A.M. and noon.

Of upwards of 3500 received messages for the 15 days, only about 30 remained undelivered at the close of the meetings, which, considering the difficulty of 'localising,' or finding out, betting men, and the great drawback which has always been experienced in this respect, must be considered a wonderful result. To expedite this matter in future, Mr. R. W. Johnstone, of the Post Office, suggests that there should be a permanent 'ring messenger,' to travel with the telegraphic staff and attend all important race meetings.

It is gratifying to add, that the whole of this immense 'traffic' was disposed of without, as far as appears, a single serious complaint, either from the press or the public; whilst the estimated telegraphic profit on the year's work of 29 days' racing was over 1200*l.*

The advantage to all concerned in these matters seems to be considerable.

Mr. Johnstone tells us that at Newmarket alone he calculates the saving of the public during the last year, on these racing items, to be not less than 300*l.*—the same being more than made up to the Post Office by the greatly-increased traffic of the season. During the year 1873 there were, in the United Kingdom and Ireland, altogether 135 race meetings. The total number of telegraphic messages sent on their account was 114,479. The total value of the messages was 5578*l.* 17*s.* 2*d.* The expenses were 1283*l.* 1*s.* 7*d.* The profit, as estimated, was 4295*l.* 15*s.* 7*d.* And the number of newspaper or press messages was 12,784.

The Doncaster meeting produced the largest number of messages on any single day, namely, the St. Leger day, when no fewer than 1999 messages were disposed of, nearly 500 of which were taken at the grand stand, and cleared off within an hour and a half.

The figures relating to Epsom show a comparative smallness in the number of messages disposed of at the meetings held there; but it must be borne in mind that the Spring Meeting is a comparatively trifling affair, while the great Derby gathering is more a pleasure than a 'business' occasion. Moreover, the great mass of press work usually telegraphed from the more distant meetings is, in the case of Epsom, carried to town by hand; and thus an important item is omitted from an otherwise very satisfactory return.

It is needless to state that the arrangements at Doncaster and Newmarket elicited expressions of satisfaction from the sporting press generally; but to measure the advantages gained by the racing public since the transfer, by merely taking the cases in which the Post Office has extended wires to a racecourse, or has either opened a new office, or improved an existing one, at the grand stand, would

be scarcely to do justice to the Department in this matter. In many cases, as for instance at Huntingdon, Stamford, Lewes, Chelmsford, Salisbury, and other towns which have race meetings, the telegraph was only at the railway stations prior to the transfer so that the public have reaped a very considerable advantage by the mere removal to the Post Office.

Not only so, but they have gained immensely by the abolition of grand-stand fees, and the introduction of the system of 3*d.* copies: not to speak of the much-extended hours during which the offices have been kept open at the different places, and the saving of gratuities on late messages. The gathering of receipts was always a great bugbear at race meetings, and greatly hindered the work at the very point where despatch was most required. So superior is the new system of stamping the message, that the 1000 messages disposed of at Newmarket within three hours were all taken in by two counter clerks, without even the semblance of the 'rush' which used to characterise the proceedings of the old days. The abolition of the 'messenger's ticket' is also an immense gain in the delivery of messages.

It only remains to add that the experience and data which the Post Office has been enabled to collect will be most valuable in coming years; and there cannot be a doubt that the increase of telegraph work at race meetings will be in proportion to the increase of facilities for many years to come.

A STUDY IN GRAY

BY MRS. C. READE, AUTHOR OF 'ROSE AND RUE,' ETC.

XVII. GLOWING GLOOM.

'Get on.' Get on with what though?

And here I am betrayed into a sad breach of confidence. I tried so hard not to tell you, to keep it quite secret until the hour should have been written, the last touch given, perhaps up to the great day, the day of days itself. Ah, it is very fitting; it wearies one, this perpetual struggle between deeds and intentions.

But I have brought myself into the hobble, so I must just help myself out of it.

David had taken Ben's advice; he had 'set to work upon something big, something he could turn his hand in'—upon, in fact, an *affaire*.

At first the magnitude of the enterprise struck him with nothing but awe; then he began to be amused at his own temerity in attempting to cope with it, or even imagining that he ever could cope with it, and would smile apparently at nothing, and sometimes laugh.

Mary could not think what was the matter with him about this time, and felt quite anxious. She had heard that there was a fair token of incipient insanity than this unreasonable kind of

David certainly was not eccentric or even odd, and there was no madness in the family; but still he had had a great deal of trouble, and you never could tell. I assure you Mary felt alarmed.

However, it was not long before he seemed all right again; indeed, he seemed rather graver than he had been heretofore. Why?

David had grown familiar with his monster, had even begun to caress and play with it. Of a night now, did he chance to lie awake,

and turbulent, impetuous choruses would surge through his mind, and

and plaintive snatches of melody would wring his heart and fill his eyes with tears—yes, man as he was, sorrowful man, who

never wept but once over his own grief—delicate fragments of music unutterably beautiful and perfect whole would hang about his

driving him wild because he knew not what to do with them, how to fit them. He had plenty of leisure just then, and could

be at his ease, being nobody. So is it always. When we are without shoes to our feet, or a decent coat to our back, or any

certainty of a bed to sleep in the night after next, our art is at its best. All that the body relishes denied, the soul spreads

her wings, and mounts where, alas, the poor pinched body has much ado to follow.

Many's the time, I'll warrant, that that most cruelly ill-used of poets, threadbare hungered Savage, would sooner have lain down under some sunny hedge, and for a while forgot himself in sleep, than toiled off to the greasy, evil-smelling coffee-house, to borrow a pen and ink wherewith to jot down his bitter thoughts. But David let him be as unhappy as he would—and that he had good cause, God knows—had still decent shelter, enough to eat, and immunity from uttered insult. Nobody called him names to his face. Under these circumstances, his work, once begun, soon became a refuge and delight and joy unspeakable. He lived for it and to it and in it. At home, looking out into the familiar street; listening to Mary's quiet talk, half sad, half wise, and wholly womanly; strolling in the silent garden, full of Alma, it is true, but full too of those earlier memories which I think always outlive the rest, because inprinted when the mind is soft; walking through the quiet lanes and fields, noting the gradual progress of things—it was spring-time now—it dwelt with him.

The scent of wallflowers, which grew in profusion just under the workshop window—he had got back into his old den, had cleared out all the rubbish, and furnished it with a table and chair, and there sat and thought; the look of the quickening earth; the hedge powdered with buds; the gardens flushed with almond-blossom, and full of all manner of good smells; the lilac-trees just bursting into leaf; the wonderful crispness and brightness of early morn; the dull red glow in the western sky of an afternoon, when the dusk began to gather, and the smoke, uprising from rubbish-heap and chimney, took a bluer tinge, and one's own fireside additional charms; the merry songs of the birds at play in the old apple-tree; and later, the pleasant noise of shaken leaves, the pleasant sight of red petals falling, falling, lightly falling amid quivering shadows on sun-chequered grass,—all clave to it and strengthened it, and in a way was it, this monster of his.

Mind, I do not say that David was in any way the same man, or ever could again be the same man, who, in the white silence of a summer night, asked Alma Snow to be his wife.

He never could be; over his mental self had passed a change similar to that wrought by smallpox on the face. Not a scar might be perceptible, but the face has altered. You would recognise it once known; but though your common sense said, 'All is there,' your uncommon and finer sense would reply, 'All is not there.' There is an impalpable something you valued most is gone. So it was with David; but with a difference. It is so difficult to say all when you know much; it is very easy to say all when you know little. That impalpable something—the something which made him different from other men, dearer, purer, better—remained; and that something was

his sympathy with the beautiful, the true, his humble, zealous, quite pious trust in art—in art's power to ennoble, in art's intrinsic worth. That remained. Nay, remained is not the word. Stricken to the depths, his outward mind made bare and lean by reason of the poorness of its fare, his inward soul shot up to hitherto undreamed-of heights. He lived a purely spiritual life, his mind wholly disengaged from things of earth, not by dint of striving or even desire—he was too shattered for that—but because the things of this earth had no power to hold him; they were so mean. Thus, being given vent, his strength put itself out, luxuriated even as might a plant at the moment of blossoming, a moment peerless without parallel. I think of all good words the best is 'first.' You see, he, this enthusiast, had never plied his soul for hire. He had never said to that soul, 'Come, we must be merry now; come, we must be sober now.' All he had was ready to flow—all the strength of him, to the good of him, all the best of him. And that is what is wanted, if a man would give the world a proper gift. He was looked down upon; he had done wrong; no one could think worse of him than he did of himself; and yet in the midst of all this blackness sprang up a hope. Ben believed in him. His songs got sung, and people liked them, said they were good, and looked for more. It helped him, the sympathy of these unknown ones. There is such an immensity of consolation to be got out of spontaneous liking. He would try to get rid of the past. He would be himself, and do his all for art; Art who had cheered him, had laid her divine hand upon his head, and breathed loveliest melodies into his ears to keep him from going mad. Kind Art! Do you think he forgot the good father, the dear mother at this time? I tell you, never had he mourned them so, not even in that bitterest of hours when he first heard that they were dead. If he succeeded, whose joy should he miss? It got between him and the score many a time, did now one face, now the other, radiant with smiles; the 'Bravoes!' thundered in his ears; soberly sorrowful—no sound. Yes, the father and the mother, theirs were the plaudits he coveted. And it is always so. The many fancy their yeas or nays constitute heaven or hell. What does the artist prize? Is it not the hearty 'Well done!' from lips one loves, for the sake of the true words which have found utterance by them? Never did David Garstays feel so lonely as now, when he had got something wherewith to fill up his loneliness. He would have liked to have been told to put away that 'tiresome scribbling,' to 'stop that dreadful humming;' he would have quite enjoyed being ordered about, and made a little less of a wonder and more of a commonplace person again; but it was not to be. So he flung himself with threefold ardour into the arms of his Ideal, thanking God meanwhile that there yet remained an Ideal into the arms of which he might fling himself.

At first, however, it oppressed him rather than consoled. It was so vague, so variable of shape. Now it was Jairus' daughter, now Mary Magdalene, now St. Hilarion. At length it resolved itself into a little-known personage, save to students and some grave souls whose literary taste inclines to the severe—a person known as Thecla, the convert and follower of St. Paul.

It perhaps may strike you as strange that David, a graduate of no university, a man of little education, as education is generally understood, who would have been hard set to write six lines of respectable Latin prose, and whose knowledge of Greek was confined to the alphabet, should have been acquainted with even the name, still less the history, of so recondite a heroine. But though his acquaintance with classic literature was slight, and only obtained through the medium of translations, with German, French, Italian and English authors he was not only at home but familiar. As a boy he liked reading. When he went to Leipzig, almost the first question asked him by that Authority already mentioned was, 'What do you read?' and on his replying yes, that books were great friends of his, he was gripped by the arm and nodded at and stared at sagely through blue spectacles, and informed that 'Dat was goot!' 'I said the Authority, 'a yong man want to rise, if he want to set de hearts throbbing, and de throats working, and de yong lady de tear straying down de cheek, let him read. Goethe, Richter, Heine—ach, but Heine is von vunderful vine boet—Shakespeare—ach, dere is de food. The body work, de body eat, so mit de mind.'

And David felt that the Authority was right, and he did read largely, lovingly; getting something worth having out of almost every book he laid hands on; getting—one sultry August night when, being utterly unable to sleep, he had relit his candle in despair—the story of Thecla.

For the people of the house in which he lodged were Catholics and in a cupboard in his room were stored a goodly collection of devotional works, missals, meditations, hymn-books, and saintly lives, these latter compiled from various sources, and sufficiently astonishing, viewed from a realistic—or materialistic, if you like it better—point of view.

Still David would often spend an hour with them. They interested him, those quaint records of the soul. For, ardent idealist as he was himself, he could not but sympathise with that fiery devotion to the unseen which enabled a Loyola to span the world, Teresa to penetrate the secrets of high heaven. Again, by the stretch of the imagination could cold, hunger, thirst, pain, be made pleasurable, or ceaseless penance, endless humiliations, unbending self-discipline, the height of luxury; and yet weak women and weak men had thankfully undergone all this and more, hoping thereby to baffle Satan and be accepted of God.

I do not say that David acquiesced in the necessity for such severity; that, pure and rigorously simple in his way of life as he was, he had ever felt in the least tempted to think of his corporeal self as 'that beast, my body.' He inclined rather to the belief that nature itself is holy, being the direct outcome of the Eternal Mind; but still he did heartily admire these brave high souls, for whom no sacrifice was too great, no task too arduous, to be accomplished in the service and to the glory of Him they loved.

And for the martyrs, especially the female martyrs, his reverence knew no bounds. Perpetua, Cicely, Symphrosia, all that chaste sisterhood had been from his earliest years familiar as the four evangelists—St. Matthew in blue and red, St. Mark in green and white, St. Luke in purple and yellow, St. John in crimson and brown—as they gazed gravely down at him every Sunday morning from the chancel window. Of a Sunday afternoon, when a small boy, he would drag Mr. Foxe's immortal volume out of its corner, and betake himself to the parlour window-seat, or in summer to the arbour, and carefully con over all the terrible details with a child's keen appetite for horrors. At eight years old, I believe he thought there was not such another book as that in the world. *Robinson Crusoe* was nothing to it. Thus, when on that airless August night aforesaid he chanced upon the really beautiful history of Thecla, sweetest and most heroic of maidens, it was no wonder, I think, that he read on like one spellbound, that for the ensuing day, and for days and days, he could not get it out of his head. Now he was at Iconium, a spectator of the meeting between Onesiphorus and Paul, now feasting with Thamyris, now standing with Thecla before the Roman governor, now in prison with Paul, now on the road to Lycia, now in the streets of Antioch, now in the amphitheatre, smitten mute with awe at beholding the lion crouch and fawn, the bull snuff the sawdust and turn away, now shouting, as shout they all—proconsul, lictors, citizens, foreigners, all that vast multitude gathered together beneath the cloudless vault of an Eastern heaven to gloat over the dying agonies of a defenceless maid—'There is but one God, the God of Thecla!'

'If only I were a painter,' said he one evening to Gaspard Cogner, his great friend, as they strolled through the quiet streets and squares arm in arm, as was their wont when work was over, 'I would paint such a picture as would astonish you. I would set about it at once, and never stop till I had finished; and then I might die. I should do nothing better.'

Gaspard laughed.

'And the name of this amazing production?' asked he airily.

'Thecla.'

Whereat Gaspard only laughed again. Some beauty of the Biergarten or the Promenade, he supposed. He was not given to

troubling himself much about the conceptions of his friends; he generally found them, the friends, quite communicative enough without being urged. For himself, he knew what he meant to do. He meant to give *les Parisiennes* something new to laugh at, and *les gamins* something fresh to sing. Opéra bouffe was his line. Why? It paid.

At a loss, or rather puzzled, what to choose as the groundwork of this 'big thing,' to the handling of which he felt more and more inclined day by day, quite irresistibly drawn, in fact, as time went on, it seems natural enough that David should at last have fixed on the legend which had once so powerfully excited his imagination. It had its drawbacks. It was long. To put it fairly and dramatically before the public, so that each point might be made, and made pointedly, a large and powerful cast would be required—a cast which would test the resources of an impresario otherwise than pecuniarily. David pondered it, lived it, felt it, criticised it, tried to improve upon it—failed; put it away, tried something else, came back to it. Yes, the big thing would have to announce itself to the world as *St. Thecla*, that was certain.

Having arrived thus far on his mental hands and knees, so to speak, he stopped, straightened himself up, looked rather fierce, went into the house—he had been working in the garden, he never paused to think—got some music-paper and pens and ink, and walked straight off to the workshop, bolted the door, sat down, and was seen no more till the following morning. That day was Saturday. He would be busy till dinner-time. His head was full of *Thecla*, but she must wait; it would do her no harm. You see this very daring young man was not in the least scared at himself—he knew what he could do and what he meant to do. *Thecla* must wait. So he went about his business quite cheerfully till the evening; then he found his way to the workshop again. Yes, there all was, safe enough. Plan, rough draught of the overture, the words of the first part—he meant to be his own librettist—all. He sat down and read over his plan, based on two pages of his Leipzig note-book. In the streets of Iconium one Onesiphorus, a Christian, hears that Paul is on his way thither. Filled with joy, he goes off to meet him. The apostle, accompanied by Demas and Hermogene and surrounded by the brethren, salutes him graciously, and ultimately takes up his abode in his house. Here he delivers a discourse on virginity, recommending the same as a gracious and god state, and well pleasing to the Lord. At the window of an adjacent house sits a girl listening with all her might. This girl is Thecla. Long after the apostle has finished speaking she remains, lost in thought. Her mother, Theocleia, bids her come away. She pays no heed. Alarmed, Theocleia sends for Thamyris, Thecla's betrothed. Thamyris comes, but either Theocleia has never really lov

him or her whole nature is changed ; at all events, he remonstrates in vain. She remains at the window, watching, watching for a glimpse of Paul. The family friends are distracted, as it is fitting family friends should be. Mad with jealousy—Thecla is beautiful, and he loves her—Thamyris goes forth. As he wanders to and fro, nursing his wrong, he happens to fall in with Demas and Hermogenes, the companions of Paul, but disaffected towards him for various reasons. They, this worthy pair, contrive to render themselves acceptable to the passionate young noble, and so learn the cause of his discontent. Pleased by their manner, he invites them to his house, which invitation they readily accept. Other guests arrive. A feast is made. The wine having been freely circulated, Thamyris again bitterly complains of Paul. Demas and Hermogenes, glad to gratify their private spite, suggest that he should be accused before the proconsul of sedition. Thamyris, to venture on a colloquialism, jumps at the idea. Away they rush—host, guests, rabble—to seize the apostle, who allows himself to be taken with the intrepid calmness of one for whom the cruelties of man have lost their terrors. Brought before the governor on a charge of corrupting foolish women, and so endangering public virtue, his accuser being Thamyris, he makes answer on such wise that the heart of that dignitary is moved, and he orders him to be imprisoned until such time as he shall be able to grant him a second hearing. Pursued by the taunts and insults of the enraged populace—enraged why it knows not, as is the wont of populi—Paul is led away. During his captivity he is visited by Thecla, herself an escaped prisoner. Touched by her earnestness, the apostle permits her to remain, and instructs her in the Christian faith. She is sought for by her relations, and found, but she will not be forced away. Together they face the judge. Paul is sentenced to be scourged and turned out of the city, Thecla to be burned alive. Her own mother demands most clamorously that such shall be the manner of her death ; she is indeed her bitterest foe. The wood is brought, the pile made, the maid bound. But scarcely has a twig caught fire, when down come such torrents of rain that the amphitheatre is deluged. Thecla is saved.

Now Paul is fasting with Onesiphorus and his wife and children in a new tomb near to Iconium, and one day the children, being hungry, for they have no bread, say, ' We have no bread ; ' whereupon the apostle takes off his cloak, and says, ' Go, buy bread.' And as the child goes, who should he meet but Thecla come to look for Paul. ' He is in distress about thee, and hath prayed six days,' says the boy, and takes her to him. They embrace, and are exceedingly glad. Thecla declares that henceforth she will abide with him. But Paul hesitates. ' Thou art very fair,' he says, ' and the age is shameless ; I fear that thou mayest fall into temptation.'

'Baptise me,' she replies, 'and I shall know temptation no more.' But Paul will not baptise her yet; he bids her wait.

Onesiphorus goes away, Paul and Thecla travel on to Antioch. Now Thecla is, as Paul said, very fair, and as she enters Antioch a man called Alexander falls in love with her, and would embrace her in the open street. But she will have none of him, and even in this sore plight, finding that Paul has disappeared, she being alarmed for his safety, cries out that she is well born and rich, and implores them not to hurt 'the stranger.' Then Alexander in a fury brings her before the governor, and the governor sentences her to the wild beasts, and she is given into the charge of Tryphœna, a kinswoman of Cæsar's, who has just lost her only daughter, to be kept till the games.

Gradually the day of martyrdom draws near, to the great grief of Tryphœna, who becomes much attached to the beautiful young Christian, partly on account of her natural sweetness, and partly because of her resemblance to Falconilla, her dead child. At the appointed hour Thecla is led forth. But the lioness which is first let loose upon her lies down and licks her feet. A bear would harm her, but the lioness kills him. Then a lion, which belongs to Alexander, and which has been trained to fight with men, is brought, but the lioness kills him too. Hereupon the governor orders the lioness to be destroyed, whereat the women present break forth into loud lamentation. All manner of fierce beasts do they set on Thecla, but she is enveloped, as it were, in a fiery cloud, which keeps them off. At length, seeing a trench full of water by her side, she flings herself into it, exclaiming that in the name of the Lord Jesus she is now baptised on this her 'last day.' Then the governor, being enraged, condemns her to fight with bulls. But neither do they hurt her. Convinced at last that she is directly under the protection of Heaven, he calls her to him and says, 'What art thou?' 'I am a servant of the living God,' she replies. And then from the theatre uprises such a shout as has never been heard in that place before. The crowd proclaims as with one voice, 'There is one God, the God of Thecla!'

But the holy maid, in her joy, forgets not Paul. Eight days with the good Tryphœna, and she is on her way to look for him again. She finds him preaching the word in Lycia. He receives her with gladness, and takes her to the house of one Hermæus. Having tarried with him there a while, she tells him that she is going back to Iconium.

'Go, teach the word of God!' says Paul.

Back in her native place, she hastens to the house of Onesiphorus, falls on her knees on the pavement where Paul stood to preach, kisses it, prays, and then, rising up, returns to her own home. Her mother lives, but Thamyras is dead. Having declared

to Theocleia the marvels which have befallen her, and the glory of the Lord, she departs to Seleucia, there to dwell in complete retirement for seventy-two years, having left Iconium when she was eighteen years old.

Such is the substance of the legend on which David Garstays thought to found his claims to fame, which seemed to appeal to him with a force quite extraordinary. He could so well enter into the divine fervour, the heavenly purity, the intense sweetness, the unswerving constancy of Thecla. All that troubled him was Paul's conduct at Antioch. Surely he ought not to have let her fight her own battle with Alexander. He ought to have come forward like a man, apostle though he was, and knocked the rascal on the head. However, David tried to make the best of it, for the sake of his oratorio.

XVIII.

SOUNDS THAT SHINE.

UPROSE the portentous day, a sober autumn day—a day preceded by a night of thunder, lightning, and terrible swishing rain—a day which found David and Mary in London lodgings—lodgings which had already a look of home, owing to Mary's subtleties. They left Chardstock at the latter end of August, just as the roses began to fade, and the dahlias and hollyhocks and sunflowers and asters to make their value known, and vegetable-marrows and cucumbers and peaches and nectarines and William pears grew plentiful. Mary was sorry to leave just at that time, the garden was in such good order; but David said it was necessary that he should be in London to superintend the preparations for the first performance of that perfectly new and striking and original work, whereto all his thoughts and acts and words naturally converged; and as he did not seem to like the idea of leaving her all by herself, and she had nowhere else to go to, she thought she would come too, if Ben could find them nice lodgings, which accordingly Ben did, devoting the best part of one Sunday to that difficult and fatiguing task. Old Edwards, the tuner, would see to the shop.

'I shall go for a good walk,' said David, as they sat down to breakfast. 'Everything's ready—I made sure of that last night; and I want fresh air. Will you come?'

But Mary had her dress to finish—the dress, a beautiful gray silk, a birthday present from Ben, in which she intended to appear that evening. She was her own dressmaker, and wisely, she always looked nice. Besides, she did not want to be tired. So David set off by himself, taking the train to Barnes, and then cutting across the common, up the private road to Richmond Park, and through Robin Hood's Gate to Kingston Vale, and so by Wimbledon home. He was wonderfully fond of a long solitary

tramp, and at no time of the year is sylvan scenery more beautiful than in autumn. The abundance of life; the pheasants running in and out among the bracken; the rabbits flashing about under hedge and thorn; the antlered stags eyeing you proudly from afar; the playful hares bounding gloriously athwart the sward; the brown and yellows of the fallen leaves; the exquisite atmospheric blues; the serenity, the hush, as though Nature were quite glad to rest, and thought of dozing peacefully under that nice white counterpane which winter will so soon spread over her, with absolute relief—all combine to produce a picture whereon he who looks unmovedly must, it seems to me, be a dull wight indeed.

David thought he had never seen anything so beautiful. It strengthened him; it gave him tone.

'If no one has a good word to say for her,' thought he, meaning Thecla, 'if I am culled mad and the thing rot, I can still come here. This must remain beautiful. O divine repose of earth! And the anxieties, doubts, harassing reflections of all sorts whatsoever which had of late so heavily burdened his mind, seemed to fall away even as a cloak. He felt light, refreshed, buoyant. In fancy he saw himself bâton in hand,—he had assumed the onerous post of conductor, finding that he understood his own meaning better than anybody else, however famous, however experienced,—he saw himself, bâton in hand, I say, leading his men on to victory.

'Burn him, burn her!' yelled a fierce multitude down the still glades.

'O, tell me of the Lord!' sang Thecla to Paul, sitting at his feet in the dungeon at Iconium.

'Is love a dream?' sighed Thamyris, and a cock pheasant flew skyward cackling. That brought David to. He never could resist a joke. Aloud he laughed and heartily as he heard that outcry. So he fared, now here, now there. Now gazing on the sunny slopes of the fallow deer of Richmond; now climbing the sandy steeps of Wimbledon; now threading the crowded London streets, alone yet always in company—in company with tunicked crowds, with Roman governors, with keen-eyed Paul, grave Onesiphorus, clamorous Theocleia, silky reptilians Demas and Hermogenes, distraught Thamyris, one white maid, straight, tall, like to a lily growing well in its appointed plot, clad in robes hued like to her face—face he had never seen, would never see. That made it dear, I think. So on all day.

With regard to the practical setting forth of his Ideal, David had experienced far less difficulty than he had anticipated. In the first place, Ben, well known in the musical world as well as the dramatic, had brought his all to bear, and being now a recognised celebrity, that all was tolerably substantial; and, in the second

the Authority chanced to be in town. That alone would have been sufficient; that alone was sufficient. This good man's school was his life. Did a Leipziger evince talent, he considered it his bounden duty to impress that fact upon the world by all the means at his disposal, simply out of regard for a dear old friend.

'My tear Garschter,' exclaimed this worthy man, when David informed him of his undertaking, 'nicht wahr?'

'But true,' smiled David, 'quite and certainly true!'

'And it is a goot thing—a quite, really, positify goot thing?'

'So far as I can tell,' was the modest answer; 'at all events, I have set my heart on it.'

'You have set your heart! Ven you have come to a—was ist es?—a teuzair'—the Authority prides himself on his 'Englishness'—'you have stopped, and thought, and losed it a little, dere is nichts wie lofe, and it has come right?'

David nodded.

'Dat is goot,' said the Authority, 'dat ist wie es should be. I will write an my tear freund Benedict. Benedict ist your man. He is artiste *comme ça*,' sticking up five pudgy not too clean fingers, and reckoning them off with other five as pudgy and even dirtier.

So it came to pass that David was given his chance at once without any to-do at all. I cannot say that this good fortune much exhilarated him. 'Quickest to blow, soonest to go,' was a favourite saying of Mrs. Garstays, and somehow it sounded very wise in the ears of her firstborn just now; still he had voluntarily essayed greatness, and he must stand by the issue of his own temerity. No one had said to him, 'Write an oratorio.' He had written an oratorio of his own free will. He had challenged the public taste; whether the public were charmed or disgusted was no matter. He must be himself.

So the night came, the huge, tremendous, all-answering night.

St. James's Hall was to be the *champs de bataille*.

'Dear me,' said Mary, putting her head out of the little room that we all know so well, to the left, speaking as a listener, of the orchestra, 'how few people!'

David looked over her shoulder. Truly the hall was half empty.

Still he was not disconcerted. Bass of the *Olympus* made his appearance in the stalls at that moment, and he, David, knew so well what was good.

Seven forty, seven forty-five, seven fifty; the little room was crammed full. Round the Authority, talking at least three languages at once, and at the top of his voice, and shrugging his shoulders, and turning up the whites of his eyes, and turning down the corners of his lips—this at his pet aversion, English pianoforte-playing—after a fashion frightful to behold; round the Authority, I

say, were gathered some half-dozen of not the least talented or distinguished members of the musical profession as pursued in London. Thecla, a dark, slight, intellectual-looking lady, beamed graciously on Paul, a fair, pleasant, but decidedly unapostolic-looking little gentleman; Thamyras made himself agreeable to Mary, who took his civilities with perfect composure, just as she might have taken the civilities of Mr. Root the greengrocer; Theocleia consulted David about a *rallentando* at the close of her first solo. Every one seemed in excellent spirits, and bent on doing his or her best to obtain a success.

'Fear nothing,' said the Authority, gripping David's arm, and eyeing him as he might a small boy detected in some heinous enormity. 'Forget the behind, think only of the before.'

Whereat David laughed heartily, and opening a certain morocco case, took thence a beautiful ivory baton, which had been presented to him that evening by Ben after dinner, along with the most magnificent and elaborate verbal tribute to his genius and manly excellence, delivered *ore rotundo*, with a glass of champagne in one hand and the other thrust sensationally into the bosom of a 'vite vestit putchissed,' at least so that choice spirit affirmed, 'a puppus.'

For, the cries of the strings, the rustling of the programmes, the zeal of those who sold 'books,' and the increased temperature, showed that time was all but up.

Hark! one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight.

David, followed by at least two bright eyes—Mary did most heartily hope that people would be pleased—mounted the platform, walked quickly to his stand, bowed first to the orchestra, who applauded him heartily—he already numbered many a friend, and warm friends too, among that select company; then to the audience, now fairly numerous, who, seeing in him the composer of certain well-known songs, and a man of undeniable talent, if nothing more, welcomed him, if not quite so heartily, still with sufficient warmth.

A hush, and the overture began.

Master of the *technique* of his art in all its branches, David had poured into this composition the bitter-sweet, the anguish, the ecstasy, the faith, the despair, the doubts, the hopes of his whole life. He had sat down to it with his heart full to agony; relief he must get somehow, or die; and relief he got. Works so accomplished, at the point of the goad so to speak, under the pressure of an irresistible, imperious necessity—a necessity which cannot be quelled or got rid of, or run away from—seldom fail, being in accordance with established rules of form, to make their mark. Their origin is human, their substance is human. Humanity accepts itself.

'Ach!' said the Authority, when the coda—the coda with its delicate suggestions of enchanting melodies, its rapturous calm, its

wondrous harmonies swept straight from angelic lyres—charmed his attentive ears, 'how goot!'

And others thought so too. The storm of applause which broke forth at its close was simply tremendous. David felt quite overwhelmed. He had never dreamt of anything like this. But it was very delightful. And on turning to bow his acknowledgments to the balcony, who should he see smiling down on him, his face literally ablaze with delight, his hands and feet going like fury, but Fred, Fred Thouless, whom he had believed to be hundreds of miles away, working hard at his fugues and études and concertos on the shores of the lordly Rhine. This, I think, gave the finishing touch to David's triumph. Had you asked him that morning what he desired most over and above success, keeping within the range of possibility, he would have replied, 'That Fred should be present.' And now by some unaccountable caprice of Fortune, who can be generous when she likes, he was. Surely never was man more blessed. But there was no time for thought. A smile, a nod, and to work again.

St. Thecla was an oratorio in four parts, to be given two and two, an interval of ten minutes taking place between the second and third. The first of these divisions ended with the imprisonment of Paul at Iconium at the instance of Thamyras, who sang bass, and was a very hot-headed young man indeed. The second brought Thecla safely through the great acts of her martyrdom. The third, having set forth her reunion with Paul, and changed the scene from Iconium to Antioch, terminated with a gigantic chorus, scored in eight parts, and exhibiting a knowledge of instrumentation and power of handling an orchestra 'which,' said the *Olympus* on the following morning, 'fitly applied, bids fair to add the name of Garstays to that muster-roll of worthies which it is alike the glory and delight of every true musician to call over.' Whilst the fourth, with equal strength and tenderness, simply, naturally, and beautifully, brought the story to a close. Now the sole objection which could be urged against this setting was its length.

The Authority looked grave when the score was first put into his hands.

'Humph,' granted he, 'you are determined they shall have enoff.'

But when David pointed out to him the wonderful completeness of the tale, how, whether fact or fiction, incident followed incident with such unerring propriety that to make any changes would be to mutilate rather than improve, the Authority screwed up one eye and scratched his cheek, and thought he'd better see what it was like before venturing on farther criticism. And when he did see, he criticised no more. Still it was long. David himself was afraid that the people would get tired, and yet he could not impinge on

his own sense of artistic fitness to court cheap fame. He was above that, let him be what he might. But up to the close of the first part no symptoms of weariness or anything like weariness were visible. Each beauty met with promptest recognition. The prison duet between Thecla and Paul was redemanded tumultuously, the most tumultuous individual present being one Frederick Thouless; as also was Thecla's solo in the amphitheatre at Iconium, and a chorus of young men and maidens; and when the welcome interval arrived—David was burning to get at Fred—the claps and bravoos broke forth with redoubled vehemence.

Never was there a more pronounced success. You could tell that by the way in which people talked to each other, and got up and looked about them, and hunted up their friends. They were all agog. They had got something to rave about at last.

'A new Mendelssohn,' said Leech of the *Arcopagite*; 'who is he? Anybody know anything about him? Where does he come from? Was he born of respectable parents?'

'Don't know, I'm sure,' replied Montague Raymond of the *Whip*. 'Deuced clever fellow anyway. Can write airs. Know that song of his, "She came, and the sun came after"?—most lovely thing. "She came—" and Mr. Raymond, who prided himself on his tenor voice, broke forth into melody.

'Ha!' said Bass, the mighty Bass, 'this is something like a first night. I say, old boy,' as the Authority rolled up, picking his teeth—he wanted to hear with his own ears how things were going, did that sly Authority—'you've a certain method in your madness, you know;' and the Authority smiled and rolled on.

'Then he's a Leipziger,' said Mr. Leech; 'that accounts for his evident weakness for nine-sevenths and diminished thirds. By the way, the horns should be touched up; they were as flat as ditch-water in that last chorus. I'll just make a note of that.'

Congratulations, exclamations, recommendations, one quiet 'I'm so glad!' from Mary, from behind Thamyras, who had again got her into a corner, and was deep in the most animated conversation, and on it went again, the great work, the Thought, the Ideal.

Ben made his appearance about eleven, just in time for the big chorus.

'By Jove,' said he to the Authority, as they stood together at the little door, 'that is fine! It puts me in mind of "The horse and his rider." Don't it you?'

'Yes,' was the quiet answer.

No fears need David have entertained on the score of his hearers' powers of endurance. Not a soul stirred till after the last solo. Then a few ladies put on their cloaks, and sundry opera-glasses were restored to their cases, but no one looked bored—every one, on the contrary, looked happy and eager, and anxious to express delight.

'For the Lamb shall lead them, shall lead them to living waters,' rose and sank the concluding chorus; 'and God shall wipe away all tears—all tears—tears,' softer and softer, 'from their eyes.'

A strange content fell on David. He might die now; he would do nothing better.

The throng having somewhat dispersed—throng of listeners, throng of singers—the members of the orchestra deputed the leader of the violins, well known as a fine and sound musician, not only in London, but Paris, Vienna, St. Petersburg, throughout the civilised world, to inform Mr. Garstays how delighted they were as a body with his work, how they trusted that the services they had rendered him were efficient, how they hoped to be the means of conveying his beautiful thoughts to the public on many future occasions—the throng having somewhat dispersed, I say, and Fred having been shaken hands with and bidden to supper, David, Mary on his arm—an arrangement at which Ben smiled not a little, and winked, I regret to state it, but veracity compels, at the Authority, who chuckled terribly—the Authority would be of the home party to-night—David, Mary on his arm, made his way into the lobby to get a cab, or, more strictly speaking, a four-wheeler and a hansom, he, Mary, and Ben and Fred going into the one, and the Authority into the other, because, as that worthy man observed, he was fat.

'If you will stay here,' said David, halting in the hall, full of glaring posters, the contents of which he knew by heart, 'I will see what is to be done.'

For hooded ladies and crush-hatted gentlemen still crowded about the door, and the private carriages still drove up and drove off in ceaseless succession. So Mary with her triple escort stayed, and David went forth to try his luck. The pavement was miry; the night was wet, a small but drenching rain falling steadily.

'Hie!' he exclaimed, catching sight of an empty hansom on the opposite side of the street.

The driver waved his whip, and with a chuck of the reins turned his horse across the road. Suddenly a woman darted forward, wherefrom David could not tell, right under the horse's nose.

'Take care!' he shouted, but too late.

Down she went. The hansom-driver backed right on to the pavement; a crowd gathered.

'Take 'er to the station,' growled one lean, hungry-mouthed son of the stones; 'she's drunk.'

'Take 'er to the 'orspital,' said a woman, 'she've got 'er ribs broke. Ah, these 'ere gentlefolks with their fine pranciu' ways!'

'Will you allow me to pass?' said David, pushing by, determined that if mischief were done he would do his best to undo it. His tone was authoritative, despite its civility. They let him pass.

A policeman had his arm under the woman's head; on her face

fell the strong light of a neighbouring lamp. David stopped short. The woman was Alma Snow.

'I don't think, sir, that there's much the matter,' smiled the policeman; 'you see the 'orse didn't touch 'er.'

David tried to think.

'She has fainted,' he said; 'she cannot stay here. See, she moves. Perhaps if you were to support her to the Hall—'

'Get 'er some brandy,' observed the man who had just suggested that she was drunk; 'that's the stuff! That 'd soon bring 'er to!'

'Poor creetur,' said a woman, 'she've been 'ard put to it, that's certain.'

'Send them away,' said David, slipping half-a-crown into the policeman's hand; 'this person is a lady.'

'Be off with you!' exclaimed the guardian of the peace; 'be off at once! Come, move on, there!' With a sullen growl, like hyenas driven from a grave, the loathsome gathering broke up.

Alma sighed, drew the back of her hand across her eyes, then stared vacantly, first at the policeman, then at David. Yes, stared vacantly at David, so lost was she. They took hold of her by the arms, he and the policeman. They lifted her on to her feet. So assisted she crawled feebly to the pavement.

'What had I better do?' said David, quite at his wits' end.

'Put 'er in a cab, sir,' was the prompt answer, 'and send 'er 'ome. You can pay the fare before'and, if you wish to.'

This seemed good advice enough. Between them they got her into a four-wheeler which happened to drive up at that moment,—the driver, an old hand, thought he saw a chance,—and shut the door.

'What is your address?' inquired David, putting his head in at the window.

'My address?' echoed Alma dreamily. '3 Wellington-place, Notting Hill.'

'3 Wellington-place, Notting Hill, then. What's the fare?'

'Six shillings,' said the cabman.

And six shillings David gave him. Then he hurried back to the Hall.

XIX.

THROUGH CREEKS AND INLETS.

RIGHT merry was that supper-party, right jovial were they, those five happy souls, for even David could not help but be a little glad in his deep sober way. It meant so much to him, this lifting of the veil. Now it seemed that he might live out his life in his own way and yet do well, be free of blame and even please. I do not think, though, that he cared much for praise. He was so brimful



A. W. Cooper, del.

DAVID RECOGNISES ALMA.

Edmund Evans, sc.



thoughts, if he might but be let get rid of them. Ambition too, was but a name to this peculiar man. It had not been so yet. There was a time when the plaudits which had assailed ears that might have wafted him to Paradise; but that all over now, with many another boyish foolery. Now all he had was peace and liberty to be himself, and that he had; surely as but natural for him to be glad. Yet sour mingled with his joy, as always.

'Mary,' said he, when they two sat alone, or rather stood and sat, as Mary was lighting her candle—'a strange thing happened to-night.'

'Indeed!' said she.

'I was a long time about getting the cab.'

'Well, yes, I suppose you were; at least you said so.'

'Do you know why?'

Mary shook her head, her sleek dark head, with its bright splash of red. Mary looked nicer than usual to-night. Ben thought, as he considered her, that she had had a very narrow escape at some time of her life of being a downright pretty girl.

'Well, a woman fainted in the street.'

'Poor creature!' said Mary, straightening the wick.

'And more than that, that woman was Alma;' quite steadily. Her nerves were taut.

'Alma!'

'Yes.'

They eyed each other.

'I put her into a cab,' pursued David at length; 'she gave me her address. But don't you think we ought to see after her? She seemed very ill.'

'I suppose so if she fainted,' was the rather dry response.

Again silence.

'Of course,' went on David again, 'I should not think of calling on her myself; she would not like it; but if you were to—Would you very much mind?'

Mary looked at that candle hard.

'What did she seem like?' said she at length. 'Did she look very ill? Do you think she would care to see one?'

'Yes,' said David gravely, 'I do.'

Mary seemed to reflect.

'I will give you my answer to-morrow,' she said presently. 'I will always have time to consider;' and then went her way, knowing very well what she meant to do, knowing also how to confer a favour.

'If you will give me Alma's address,' said she after breakfast next morning, 'I will go and see her. I have been thinking it over, and it certainly does not seem right to turn one's back on a woman completely now that she has been thrown in our way;' quite as though she had originated the idea too.

'O, thank you!' replied David; 'that is indeed kind! No. 3 Wellington-place, Notting Hill. But I will come with you as far as the 'bus goes; we must take a John Bull. Yes, do let me. I really have nothing to do. If Ben comes, he will wait till I get back. I shall be ready by the time you are.'

Mary submitted; she would rather have gone alone. She would rather have run as many risks, and been as uncomfortable as ever she could, so as to have something to look back upon with relish, and a sense of having triumphed at the call of conscience over fleshly weakness. She so enjoyed sacrificing herself to the good of others, or thought she did. But David was not easily withstood; and although she hoped she knew the vanity of earthly joys, she could not quite shut out from her mental eyes and ears all that took place last night. She submitted. In a quarter of an hour they were seated in a John Bull omnibus, and being jolted and bumped towards the 'Grove.' How pleasant it was to have it in one's power to do kindnesses to others!

'There,' said David, when by dint of strenuous inquiring they at length arrived at the top of Wellington-place—he was doubly glad that he had come when he saw what Wellington-place was like; a terrible, dingy little street, full of dirty, ragged, yelling children, in the heart of as pestiferous and villanous a neighbourhood as the eye of man can well behold,—'there,' said he; 'and now good-bye. No. 3, mind; and tell her that she's to make whatever use of me she can. Mind that! I might really do her some good now.'

Now! Proud word, glad word, if only because of this. All the old bitterness seemed to have been swept clean away, annihilated by the sight of a white pinched face.

'Very well,' said Mary; 'don't wait dinner'—they dined at two as a rule—and picked her way across the street.

He watched her up a flight of steps a little less grimy than the rest, and went. The day would be long, he thought.

Business—the Authority sprang up from the piano as he reentered the little drawing-room; he had come to go into the accounts. Pleasure—Ben arrived just as the cloth was being laid,—an hour's dreaming with Schubert—Schubert was David's chosen intimate; indeed, he was a brother genius—the same tender trifling with rare thoughts, the same intensity and dramatic force, the same childlike gaiety; yes, though the heart be leaden, the fortunes low,—and Mary came back.

'Well?' said he, his hands still on the keys, though his eyes held hers.

'It is very terrible,' she said, sitting down on the first chair she came to, 'very terrible indeed!'

'She is not dead?' he exclaimed, twisting round on the music stool and directly fronting her.

'Dead? No,' she answered, loosening her bonnet-strings.

'Then why is it terrible?'

'I can't tell you all now; but of course to have a child, and be ill and without proper means of maintenance, is bad enough.'

'A child!' said David, and clasped his hands about his knee.

'Mary,' said he presently, 'tell me one thing—is she married?'

'Yes,' said Mary quietly, as she might kill a spider. 'But,' pursued she, after a while, feeling in duty bound, 'her husband has deserted her; a good thing too, I should say, if all she tells me is true.'

David looked up interestedly; you could not fail to notice that.

'He must be,' went on Mary, warming with her subject—few things a perfectly perfect woman likes better than soundly to abuse a man—a thorough brute. To leave that poor young creature there for three whole months, and never write a line or send a farthing, I call it positively abominable!'

'Perhaps he is dead,' ventured David.

'Not he; at least she does not think so. She thinks that he has merely made up his mind to be done with her. He seems to have treated her extremely badly from the very first. She has got Peter still, by the way.'

David sighed.

'Well,' said he at length, 'we must do what we can. What is the matter with her, though? Is she in bed?'

'No,' said Mary, 'she is not in bed; she is forced to be up, to look after the child. Besides, I do not think that there is anything particular the matter with her, except—not having enough to eat.'

'Good God, how horrible!' exclaimed David, and remembered his own nice dinner with disgust.

'Yes,' said Mary, 'it is indeed horrible. But, as you say, we must do what we can. She does not like to accept favours, though; that I can see; indeed, it was some time before she would ask me to sit down. But she seemed very pleased at your doing so well. She heard *Thecla*. She went without her dinner yesterday in order to be able to go, and she thinks it wonderful.'

David smiled. His mind travelled back to the old workshed, to that night when she had stood before him white and red and gold, and gazing at him gravely out of her clear eyes told him that some day he would be great. So it was agreed that she should be made friends with, and helped and encouraged as freely as possible.

'Did you tell Ben?' inquired Mary, as she rose to go to her room.

'No,' said David; 'I thought it better not.'

Mary smiled.

XX.

THE SWEETNESS OF THE FARTHER SHORE.

ON crept the weeks. David still remained in London, running down to Chardstock about once a fortnight just to see how things prospered. He could afford to keep a regular assistant now. He intended to be back by Christmas, he said, and had composed a Christmas anthem on purpose. The Vicar, too, shortly after *St. Thecla* was performed, commissioned him to give Messrs. Gray and Davison an order for a new organ, the price not to exceed five hundred pounds, he, the Vicar, and the principal residents in Chardstock being of opinion that it was not fitting that a man of his talents should be condemned to waste his skill on a worn-out instrument. It was generally hoped that he might resume his duties at Christmas. Ben thought David was very foolish to think of resuming the said duties at all.

'You might get a London church,' said he, 'and start a really fine service, and be paid two hundred a year, to say nothing of the advantage of keeping your name well before the public. There are plenty of men who would be glad of you just as a "draw."'

But David took his own way, a way very much unlike anybody else's way, and went to and fro, and minded his business, and flourished exceedingly.

Ben, when he was in a facetious mood—and when was he not—would chaff him tremendously about this sudden prosperity of his.

'Cash me a thousand-pound cheque?' he would inquire, rummaging in his pockets. 'Got a banknote anywhere about—I want to light my pipe.'

'Dear me!' said Mary, one fine December morning, abandoning a letter she had been reading for a muffin; 'well, that is very nice. Poor thing, she seems so pleased.'

'Has she found good lodgings?' said David, cracking his egg.

'Yes, very; and the baby looks better already. Bless my heart! I do wish you could see her; I am sure you would be charmed. Even the people at the station said what a sweet child.'

David remained silent a while.

'I wish so too,' said he presently; 'I should like to see them both.'

'Then why not do so?'

'She might consider it an intrusion.'

'Nonsense! She knows very well who has been so good to her.'

'Good!' echoed David impatiently. 'I wonder,' he went on at length, 'if it would be possible to go and come back in a day.'

'There is Bradshaw,' said Mary, rising and taking that illustrious work from an adjacent table; 'you can easily find out.'

He smiled rather sheepishly, and as though he were afraid of being laughed at.

'There's a train at eleven-twenty,' he said presently, 'and one at twelve.'

'But what about getting back?'

'Well, let me see. Hastings—six forty-five; that gets to Victoria at nine fifty-eight. Would that be too late for you?'

'O no,' replied Mary, 'not in the least. It is now a quarter to ten. I will go and get ready directly. I think it will be delightful.'

So at last Alma and David were to meet, soberly, tranquilly, face to face, as friends. A space, and Miss Baker knocked at Mrs. Ronayne's door. Mrs. Ronayne was out, said the neat maid-servant who opened it—a striking contrast this to 3 Wellington-place—out on the Parade. Would they like to walk in and wait? No, said David; they would go out to the Parade and try to find her.

And on the Parade they found her, walking up and down, her baby in her arms, Peter in attendance; a happy smile on her lips—they, baby and she and the little shaggy wise old dog, were having fun together—a pretty pink colour in her cheeks. Changed? Yes, a little; something in the eyes, something about the mouth not quite the same, but hardly for the worse. There is a gravity which, mellowed, sits not on a young face ill.

On seeing them she stopped; her cheeks took a deeper tinge. David stopped too, but Mary went up to her.

'How well you're looking!' said she, as they shook hands. 'Your letter quite excited us, and we set off at once. David is afraid that you are not glad to see him,' smiling round at him as he came slowly forward.

'He need not be,' smiled Alma—just her old sweet smile. 'It is what I have longed for for weeks.'

And then they shook hands quite naturally, and as though they met every day.

Very happily went that too short afternoon, very hard did it seem to say good-bye. Mary really liked Alma now, partly because she was poor and had been made to suffer, which she thought was a most excellent thing for her, and partly because she was baby's mother. Baby was Mary's idol.

'What is her other name?' inquired David, watching the little creature crawl about the floor.

'Alma,' replied Mrs. Ronayne.

'Indeed!' said he. 'That is just as it should be. You are exactly alike. Don't you think so, Mary?'

'I don't know,' answered Mary, shaking a coral rattle. 'Baby's features are so delicate.'

Alma smiled. Mary was Mary still.

'You will come to see us,' said David, 'when you return to London; that is, if we are still there? And remember you are to have a piano, and go to work *mit geist*. My word means something now; and we will have a series of concerts, orchestral concerts, and I will write you a concerto, something specially for you. Ah, we shall see!'

And Alma pressed his hand; her heart was too full for words. This was the man who, for her, had been held one with felons, an outcast, a reproach.

Not very long after that, about February in the ensuing year, musical circles were pleasantly agitated by the *début* of a pianiste of no ordinary merits or attractions. This lady's name was Alma Snow—Miss Alma Snow; and gradually it got to be understood that she was a pupil of Mr. Garstays; also that that gentleman was personally interested in her success, and made all her engagements.

The Authority, when he heard this—he had returned to his beloved Conservatorium; but news travels fast nowadays, and he was always meeting fresh people—clapped his hands and laughed authoritatively.

'Ha,' said he, 'I will write him a wedding march!'

And this was the general impression. But for once the world—the dear, sagacious, wicked old world—was out in its calculations. Ben would laugh when any one said anything about it to him; he thought that if Ronayne were to die it was just possible David might be 'fool enough.' But Ben was no wiser than his neighbours. The day came when Geoffrey Ronayne did die, when Alma, freed from a tie she had fondly imagined silken and found the heaviest of fetters, more beautiful than ever, was again free to love.

But neither she nor David ever had such a thought. They were wedded to Art. Friends they had been; friends they would be, true, warm, devoted friends, all their lives long; man and wife never.

Mary thinks this very sensible of them. She is still David's housekeeper, and considers 'the child' worth all your Beethovens, and Mozarts, and Glucks, and Mendelssohns, and Spohrs, and Schuberts, and Chopins, and Schumanns, and Wagners put together.

CHEATING THE NOR'-EASTER

THE not-unexpected visit paid us lately by Mr. Aquilo brings to my memory a certain February some five years since, when we were treated to rather an over-dose of that disagreeable personage. The late Charles Kingsley, the great apostle of muscular Christianity, strongly recommended us to cultivate his acquaintance, as exhaling a tonic most beneficial to the physical, if not to the moral, system. The experience, however, of some ten continuous days of an extra-bitter brew of his 'Pick-me-up,' on the occasion to which I allude, convinced me that 'the hard gray weather that makes hard British men' was anything but a suitable prescription for my particular constitution. Hair dried up into hay; skin rough and shrivelled up; eyes rheumy and bloodshot; lips dry and chapped; back and shoulders decidedly 'set up;' joints working stiffly and lacking lubrication; shaving a surgical operation,—these, coupled with a sensation of not having 'tubbed' for an age, and a querulous disposition to repeat the distich 'When the wind is in the east,' &c., were the disagreeable symptoms produced in my person. Perhaps, like seasickness, if one only goes on *long enough* with it, an agreeable and beneficial side may be discovered.

Under most circumstances the only result of such a climatic infiction would have been to cause me to change my usual out-of-doors occupations for home attractions: certain volumes of 'heavy reading' would have been seriously besieged; the last magazines skimmed over: an accumulation of over-due correspondence worked off; and probably a largish hole made in the baccy-jar. But what was a fellow to do when, although the wind was keen enough to take your nose off if you peeped round the east wing of the house, old Sol, as if in mockery, shone from out a cloudless steel-blue sky with a most enticing and delusive warmth? In the front porch one could positively bask in its rays; anywhere indeed was pleasant enough out of the grip of that bitter insinuating nor'-easter. So not being quite of the genus 'molly-coddle,' out I used to go, and, from the symptoms described above, I leave my readers to decide whether the treacherous influences of wind and sun combined had the effect of bracing up my system to the 'true British' form so much to be desired. Accordingly I was not sorry, on the tenth day of this miserable state of things, to read at my breakfast the following letter from a friend living in the neighbourhood:

'Dear Binks,—If you have a mind to cheat this cheerful wind, meet me to-morrow at Dutton Farm about half-past ten, and we

will spend the day in Radscliff shooting bunnies. If the sun shines, I will promise you a tropical temperature and plenty of shots; so bring a summer suit and a bagful of cartridges.—Yours truly,
 'T. L.'

That sounds comforting, thought I (how Kingsley would have despised me!), though it is sure to blow a sou'-wester to-morrow, with a driving rain, just to sell me. However, I was only too thankful to accept the invitation; and next morning, when, with my nose just peeping out of the sheets, I growled out to my housekeeper, who brought up my hot water, 'Which way is the wind this morning, Mrs. C.?' inconsistent though it may appear, I was not sorry to hear her reply, 'O, it be mortal cold agin, zur! Jist from the very same quarter as yesterday; 'tis enough to shram a body to death!' Donning an extra-thick flannel-shirt instead of the summer suit recommended, I went down to breakfast, played a good knife and fork, filled up a flask with 'something to keep the cold out,' stuffed some seventy cartridges into my bag, got into my shooting-boots and a good stout overcoat, and shouldering my musket, trudged bravely away in the face of the weather to our trysting-place.

My friend rented a tract of grass-land abutting on the sea, not far from Dutton, which he found very convenient as a farm-of-ease and change of pasture for his sheep. It was well sheltered from the north and east, and early lambs throve there as well or better than any in Dorset. It lay in as snug and warm a little basin scooped out ages ago from a mighty landslip, as any invalid could wish for to pitch his tent in, save and excepting when a sou'-wester blew; then, what with sea fog and driving rain for accompaniments you would not be long in finding out the reason why all the stunted thorn-trees assumed such a 'slantindicular' attitude, pointing as they did, with the only side that was permitted to develop, straight in the teeth of my present persecutor. But our blustering friend from the sou'-west is worse in his bark than in his bite. If you do not mind looking a 'guy,' with your hat-brim down and lashed under your chin with your pocket-handkerchief, and enveloped in waterproofs if you object to a damping, you may look him in the face all day and be none the worse; but woe betide you if you want to keep awake and make yourself agreeable after dinner the same evening; there is, to my knowledge, no such potent a soporific in the whole *Pharmacopœia*.

Along with this farm went the feeding and right of sporting on a long narrow strip of undercliff; on the latter of which privileges my friend set great store, offering, as it did, something quite unique in the way of rabbiting. This was the favoured spot which was to afford us a day's shelter from the stormy blast, and as exciting bit of shooting as ever I wish to enjoy.

Before reaching Dutton Farm, where my friend was wont to put up his horse and trap, the remainder of the road being impracticable for springs, I espied him trotting down a hill some little way off. So I was nothing loth to turn into the farm and have a good warm before he arrived, with his face mottled blue and red, and his fingers so benumbed that he could hardly unbutton his greatcoat. The old mare was 'hetched out' of the shafts and led away to the stable—how utterly wretched a clipped horse *can* look in such weather! It will make a two-hundred-pounder look dear at fifty. The gig was run back into the cart-shed, but not before a certain flask-basket had been extracted from under the seat, which contains our lunch, likewise a stone jar full of—no, *not* beer this time, but of some kind of cordial for sundry ailing sheep over the hill. A farm lad is kindly lent us to transport these articles, and off we trudge with our guns and carrying our own cartridges. 'Poor beggars!' I hear some fellow say. Two rather doubtfully-bred 'spannuls' accompany us; they have followed the gig some five miles, mean to hunt all day, and, I shrewdly suspect, will repeat that five miles again this evening. Even they, though hard as nails, do not seem to fancy this bitter wind, and keep their tails tucked in with a woe-begone unhappy appearance very different from what they will present when they get to business presently; the first bunny that is started will alter their present 'form' as if by magic.

'Botheration! the shepherd's dog has joined us. Go back home, you scamp!' Not a bit of it; you might as well shout at a post; he knows very well that there is some fun up, and doesn't mean to be left 'out in the cold' on this side of the hill, so follows at a respectful—say stone's-throw—distance, till our attention is so occupied with scenery and sport that we have no inclination to take offence at his presence. The farm lad tries to mitigate our denunciations by assuring us that 'he be a true good un arter a rabbit, he be;' so perhaps he will not do much mischief.

A good mile all 'against collar' and we have reached the backbone of the hill, along which runs a stone wall, through the loose coping stones of which the wind is hissing most savagely. 'Now take care of your gun and your shins!' says my friend, as we prepare to scramble over the wall; and his warning is not misplaced, for of all 'orkard' places to surmount when you are benumbed with cold may I suggest a five-foot wall of loose stones leaning a little *towards* you!

And now we are over, and descend a few yards of the green slope which stretches away for a mile or so down to the shore. What a wondrous and pleasant change! Only a few yards above us we can hear our late enemy howling, and see the long grass and furze-bushes at the edge of the hill nodding and waving in his blast; while but a few steps have transported us from midwinter to mid-

summer, from a land bleak and starved, swept with groaning seething wind, to an Arcadia green and smiling, the strange 'hush' pervading which is only broken by the distant tinkle of a sheep-bell, or the continuous bleating from the fold below us. Far away to the misty horizon with 'many twinkling smiles' spreads the blue Channel, calm and glistening for some distance away from the shore, where it becomes streaked with dark ruffles running before the puffs of wind which come beating down from the cliffs. A mile or two out 'white horses' show their manes, making it lively for two grimy colliers that are beating up the Channel, and shipping sea after sea. It makes one shudder to think of the hapless 'watch' waiting for their turn to warm themselves at the fo'castle galley. Right and left of us stretches the grandest coast scenery to be found, in my humble opinion, in the South of England. Would my reader enjoy it? Go stand on 'Swire Head,' between St. Alban's Head and Portland Bill, rest a while on 'Eldon's Seat,' and drink deeply 'only with thine eyes,' and be thankful. Bluff dun-coloured promontories and white jagged cliffs catch the eye alternately, as they push out into the blue deep; white specks dotted here and there reminding us that coastguard stations still exist, though smuggling has long since given up the ghost. Fair and smiling is the sea to-day, as, with the wind blowing off the land, the thinnest thread of white foam marks the line where the ever-fretful waves swirl about the rocky shore; but let the wind veer round, and blow a gale from the south-west, and there is no more pitiless lee-shore to be found: not a refuge is there between Portland and Swanage Bay, and many a good ship has here sent her *disjecta membra* ashore to be bones of contention between coastguards and fishermen. Enough Have we not the whole day to feast our eyes on this lovely picture? So we repair to a little farmhouse at the foot of the slope, which is occupied by my friend's shepherd. With him a professional conversation is held as to the estate and condition of sundry 'yeos. for whose ailments the jar of 'cordials' has been brought. The report is satisfactory; 'good luck' and 'Lucina' have brought about more 'twins' than 'singles;' and I have explained to me various devices employed to induce certain matrons of the flock to 'take to' certain 'little strangers' in the place of their own that they have lost. Now appears a certain 'old John,' who transfers three lively ferrets from the bottom of a barrel to a rusty-looking bag, swings the 'nunch' over his shoulder, shouts to a lad to join us, and we are off for Radscliff. Ten minutes' walking brings us to the head of a little ravine which leads down into the undercliff, where we are to make acquaintance with the bunnies. We pause again to admire the grandest and most picturesque bit of the whole scenery. Half a mile away, right before us, Radscliff reared up its overhanging beetling brow some six hundred feet above the sea;

not that the cliff was of the perpendicular order for anything like this height. Having fallen some eighty feet sheer, it began to slope away at an angle of 75° right down to the shore. The action of wind and weather for ages past on the face of the cliff had worked down a debris of rocks and shale, which formed a sloping undercliff of an indescribably rugged but beautiful character. Vegetation had thriven wonderfully, considering how exposed was the situation and how scanty the soil; and this was the covert we were to beat. Our appearance at the top of the path which led down to the cliff was the signal for a general disturbance amongst the inhabitants of this secluded spot; clouds of gulls and jackdaws whirled away from the cliff, wailing and chattering and informing all whom it might concern that 'There they are; there they are! Look out; look out!'—a warning not thrown away on the bunnies, who, in the distance below us, looked no bigger than rats as they scampered away in all directions. Their chief burrows lay up in the most inaccessible parts of the cliff, to which you would hardly believe, unless you saw it, that anything without wings could make its way.

'I suppose we shall find plenty more lying out in those little bushes down there,' I remarked to my friend.

'Little bushes, eh? Wait till you get down to them; you will find that they are trees large enough to shelter a man on horseback,' he answered.

And I shortly found it was no exaggeration, so deceptive is distance, and so apt is nature, when on a grand scale, to dwarf all minor objects. Yon green slope seems, at this distance, to be sprinkled with but a thin *down* of gorse; but when we reach it we find it thigh-deep and hard work for the spaniels, and we leave it with certain pungent reminiscences in the region of the knee-cap, which prove that 'distance lends enchantment to the view.' And now we are halfway down the path; cartridges are inserted and we prepare for action. The strip we had to beat was from fifty to a hundred yards wide and a mile or so in length; the walking was about as nasty as you can well imagine. A few sheep tracks were the only attempts at paths, for the shepherd's clever dog was about the only being who had any professional occupation down in this undercliff, excepting when, some three times a year, my friend shot over it. All the rabbits lying out in the covert of the undercliff, whose home lay far above our heads in the dazzling white cliff, were bound, when started by the dogs, to scramble away up the precipitous slope which led to that lofty region. It was really marvellous to see the pace at which they dodged from stone to stone, then along infinitesimally narrow ledges up and ever up, till they reached the haunts they shared with the sea-gulls. The spaniels soon gave up the chase when they found which route the rabbits took, though the sheep-dog, being longer in the leg, kept up many a hopeless pur-

suit. As the guest, I had the best beat assigned to me, and was directed to make my way along the top part of the undercliff.

And now the dogs are busy at work, and but a few minutes elapse before a rabbit is moved. Our bobtailed assistant, who has been prancing about outside the bramble thicket with a view to a bit of coursing, makes a dash at him, but, perhaps for want of his caudal appendage, he misses his stroke.

'Coming up, coming up! Look out, sir,' roars old John as bunny comes skipping up the hill, going clean away from his pursuers, sheep-dog and all. Darting across the path close to me, the rabbit goes straight up a precipice of blue shale; I have lots of time to take aim—'Mustn't blow him to pieces, you know.' Now, bang, and as my finger presses the trigger beyond recall, I feel that the object aimed at has suddenly struck off at a right angle, and I have missed by a good yard. Ye gods, what an echo! and how the gulls are startled! Away they go screaming and wheeling higher and higher into the unclouded blue. An ironical cheer from below warns me to insert a straight cartridge for the next chance, and I am thankful to say one of the desired sort came uppermost in my pocket. Thus we work our way steadily along, giving the dogs plenty of time to try the thick matted covert; and well they do it. Not much chance has any rabbit above ground of escaping the noses of Dash and Fan, as they bustle through every bit of covert that would hold a mouse, with their tails in a perpetual state of spasm and giving ever and anon a whimper and 'yap-yap' as a warning that something is afoot.

I must say the sport I enjoyed that day was of a most unique character. I thought that I had waged war with the genus cone under every conceivable circumstance of locality and difficulty; but never before or since have I heard a warning shout of '*Rabbit over head!*' and with nearly perpendicular aim tumbled a 'rocketeer' into the clutch of my extended hand; neither have I ever before expended so many cartridges with such small results. Those rabbits that made straight up the cliff were 'potted' in nine cases out of ten; but as for their brethren whose burrows lay in the rocks in the lower part of the undercliff, they were simply the most 'artful dodgers' I ever snapped gun at. They never seemed to run half a yard straight in any given or expected line; certainly their course took them over the most ragged and broken of ground, which defied all calculation shots; the fluttering progress of a butterfly was steady compared to theirs; yea, verily the tortuous antics of these little rascals, as the Paddies say, 'banged Banagher.'

Talking of butterflies, it would not have surprised me to have come across a whole convoy of 'Red Admirals;' for the climate has become, as my friend had foretold, quite tropical. The heat of the sun blazing down upon us, sheltered as we were from every breeze

ind, combined with the somewhat violent exercise necessary to mount the rocky 'impedimenta' in our paths, soon obliged me to throw off my greatcoat, which I hung on a conspicuous rock, intending to pick it up on our way home. A light summer suit would have been almost welcome.

A whirl of brown wings, and a covey rises well within range; with a mighty effort, both mental and moral, I remember that season is over. We spring them again later in the day, when I tower up with a view to seeking refuge in the stubbles on the top of the cliff. But see; they are suddenly whirled away seawards, like straws before the wind, and with much difficulty, and after a protracted battling with the elements, do they manage to reach the shore once more, and vanish round yonder point.

Not long afterwards, 'Tally-ho! tally-ho!' shouts my friend; a noble specimen of the 'red rascal,' with a white tag to his collar, canters calmly past me up the hill, and, scrambling up one of the few practicable places in the cliff, disappears from view. How he must have felt when he found his warm kennel exchanged for a wind-swept, bleak north hill! A few weeks later I remember Mr. Radclyffe's hounds ran a fox over the same cliff, two of the pack coming to an untimely end on the rocks below. It was an unusual sight to see a large field holding their horses and craning at the stupendous cliff; while the huntsman, who had gone round the pack to our entrance, picked his way on foot, booted and spurred, amongst the rocks. He never hit off his fox; and I am inclined to understand that the language in which he described the 'country' in the undercliff was more forcible than parliamentary.

And now we proceed to refresh the inner man. What a glorious spot for a sporting luncheon in winter, or a picnic in summer! As we recline on some withered bracken, we gaze away upon the blue expanse of water, and note that the colliers have not made much headway since the morning. Far away in the offing a smudge of smoke betokens the presence of a big steamer going up Channel. In one place the incessant hovering, screaming, and darting of an assemblage of gulls suggests a shoal of small fish tempted by the sun to the surface. On some rugged brown rocks not far off some solemn-looking cormorants are sitting. No Protection Bill is required, I would say, for them; for if you can approach within ninety yards without sending them away 'squattering' along the surface, you are a clever stalker, and patient withal. It is a fair scene, the contemplation of which lends a double enjoyment to our merry luncheon.

Refreshed with many sandwiches and draughts of home-brewed, and comforted by the subsequent pipe enjoyed at 'full stretch,' we leave our sport and work our way steadily homewards. I mark a rabbit entering a short hole almost at the summit of the slope. The fox extracts a ferret from the bag, and we scramble up and up on all-

fours, until I think it must be time to stop, as I see the waves *between my legs*. The ferret is slipped, a subterranean grumble, and out shoots bunny like a flash down the slope; I miss him 'clean and clever,' and then find that the process of descending the slope is by no means as simple and easy as it looks. It was humiliating before that lad (but better than breaking one's neck) to have to slip down on my hands and knees backwards. I know that I was much relieved when I got to the bottom in safety. After this we worked the ferrets in more accessible places; but with no great success, for the ground was so perfectly 'honeycombed' with holes in such close proximity that a slow shot had but little chance. I soon have to draw upon the larger store of cartridges carried by my friend, to whose more practised performance we were indebted for the respectable appearance of our 'bag,' when at the close of the day 'old John' and the 'bwoy' staggered about festooned with some twenty and odd couple of rabbits, two gulls, a hawk, and a jackdaw.

And now we make our way up out of the cliff, and turn to take a last fond gaze on the scene of our most enjoyable day. Quoth my friend, 'John, what is that sitting on the rock yonder? It looks like a man.' John can't make it out. I descry a dark object. Horrid thought! If I haven't left my greatcoat behind me; a good mile off too! What's to be done? It is too much trouble to go all the way back for it; but John promises to retrieve it for me and bring it over on the morrow. I must face the east wind as well as I can without it on my way home. Some parting directions are given to the shepherd about disposing of our spoil, and we swarm the hill again and surmount the wall only to find our old enemy more bitter than ever in his determination to punish us for having cheated him in the way we had.

I induce my friend to drive me home from Dutton, and to stay and take 'pot-luck' at dinner, the greatest insult you can offer a man, so I read the other day. All I can say is, that at this and all other 'pot-luck' dinners at which I have assisted, an amount of real enjoyment was present which is usually a stranger at the grander banquets by formal invitation which society periodically inflicts on itself. And so to bed and dreams of a gigantic rabbit airing himself in my topcoat, and laughing at old John's ineffectual efforts to catch him.

REITER-LIED

Translated from Körner

BY COLONEL H. B. GALL

' Frisch auf, frisch auf ! mit raschem Flug,
Frei vor dir liegt die Welt ;
Wie auch des Feindes List und Trug
Dich rings umgattert hält !'

KÖRNER.

AWAKE, awake ! and onwards dart,
Free lies the world before thee ;
In vain a crafty foeman's art
Would cast its fetters o'er thee !

Strike out, my steed, thy bounding feet,
O, bear me bravely now,
Where falchions flash as warriors meet
The oak-wreath waits my brow.

Resistless soars through yielding skies
The horseman's fresh'ning might,
And naught may curb in dust that lies
His spirit's daring flight.

Too swift for care he whirlleth on,
Nor wife nor child to chide him ;
Before him death, or freedom won
By that bright sword beside him.

Away, away ! we may not stay,
The bridal trumpets call,
And none who linger on the way
May cross the bridal hall.

For honour is the wedding guest,
The bride the Fatherland ;
But he who woos her to his breast
Must win from Death her hand.

Soft o'er thee then shall slumber close ;
The bride that knows no sleep,
The loved that lulls thee to repose,
Shall o'er thee vigil keep.

REITER-LIED

And e'er the spring with vernal bloom
Shall robe one greenwood tree,
She'll wake her hero in his tomb
To fame's eternity.

What reck we, then, who would be free
Of Fortune's rise or fall?
Whate'er the risks of battle be,
We'll meet and dare them all!

And if on conquer'd foes we tread,
No boast becomes the brave;
For those for whom God wields the blade
He lifts His shield to save.

Who strikes for freedom strikes for God;
In life and victory,
Or swathed in blood beneath the sod,
We bow to His decree.

Already rings the din of war,
All round its lightnings play;
Though hell be forth our path to bar,
My steed, we must away!

BELGRAVIA

APRIL 1875

HOSTAGES TO FORTUNE

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

CHAPTER XV.

'Épouvantable et complet désastre. Le vaisseau semblerait sans laisser ni un cordage, ni une planche sur le vaste océan des espérances.'

THE Frivolity is closed during the season of London's emptiness, and Mrs. Brandreth is enjoying the blissfulness of repose at the sleepy little Belgian watering-place of Heldenberg, near the good old city of Memlingstadt. Not altogether a bad place, this Heldenberg, with its monster hotel and fine sea-wall; its vast stretch of golden sands and colony of bathing-boxes; its dozen or so of smart new villas facing the sea; and its cluster of ancient houses built in a snug little hollow under the lee of a sandbank, comfortably sheltered from ocean waves and stormy winds. There are the cosiest little restaurants down in this old town of Heldenberg, a sprinkling of humble shops, a dim old church, and a post-office. All the rest of Heldenberg is new, and spreads itself in a line with its face to the sea, steadfastly ignoring the original settlement, from whose abasement the fashionable watering-place is approached by steep stone steps, upon which shrill-voiced females exhibit their small wares, and tempt the idle visitor to unpremeditated outlay. Those large flat currant-cakes which are the glory of Belgium may be had here, and the Heldenberg mussel, a fish of some distinction, is purveyed upon the stone landings. Not often does the upper town descend to the lower town, the great hotel providing for all the wants of its patrons, internal and external, and the landscape between Heldenberg and Memlingstadt offering no farther attraction to the explorer than is to be found in level sands, intersected by an occasional ditch, a sprinkling of stunted willows, a canal with barges and water-gates, and here and there the verdure of a cabbage-garden.

Mrs. Brandreth has come to Heldenberg as a quiet out-of-the-way place, where she is not likely to find many English people, or to be recognised and stared at. She has her reward. There are very few English at Heldenberg, which does not offer many attractions to the British mind. It is not a stage upon the high-road of Europe, like Ostend; it has no steamers, no direct communication with any place except Memlingstadt. Its *établissement* is infantine, its dissipations of the mildest order. The Belgians come here in flocks, proud of having created Heldenberg by their own unaided efforts. It is a plant of purely native growth, owes no favour to the rest of Europe, and its cleanliness, freshness, and brightness are very fair to Belgian eyes. To dress smartly, bathe abundantly, lounge away morning and afternoon on the esplanade, retiring at intervals for copious refreshment, and to hear indifferent music and play small games of chance in the evening, make up the sum of life at Heldenberg; a placid simple existence, not over costly, and leaving no bad taste in the mouth.

Myra has brought a box of new books, and a point-lace flounce, which she has been at work upon for the last three years. She has avoided the public life of the monster hotel, enjoyable as it is to Belgian visitors, and has established herself in two pretty rooms, *à premier*, in one of the villas facing the sea. A large family of healthy-looking children, whose existence appears to be one perpetual meal-time, occupy the apartments beneath. Myra has a balcony, lattice-shaded, in which she can sit on warm afternoons reading or working, or studying her part in Herman's new comedy, which work of genius he placed in her hands a few days before his last journey to Radnorshire.

The piece is strong, full of domestic interest and telling situations, and Myra's part is one of the finest she has ever had written for her. This quiet Belgian watering-place affords her ample leisure for study. She has time to think out the character; to create a living breathing woman from the words of her author; to enlarge upon his ideas, and give form to his airiest fancy.

'I think even he will be proud and pleased if I carry out my idea of the character,' she says to herself, sitting in the balcony in the warm afternoon sunshine with the manuscript comedy on her lap, just two days after Herman's wedding.

She has thought herself remote from all her world, and has been luxuriating in the rest and freedom which accompany the thought, when looking down to the esplanade she sees a gentleman in gray, with a white hat and bay-coloured whiskers, steadfastly regarding the balcony. His hat is raised as she looks at him, revealing the somewhat commonplace features of Lord Earlswood.

'How do you do, Mrs. Brandreth?' he remarks, with his accustomed tranquillity. 'I thought I couldn't be mistaken. Your people

could not tell me your number, so I have been exploring What's-its-name. I forget what the Belgians call this settlement. Rather like the east-end of Margate without the cockneys, isn't it ?

'Pray come in, if you want to talk,' says Myra, with vexation of spirit, rolling up her manuscript.

Lord Earlswood is prepared to converse placidly from the pavement, regardless of the impression he may make upon the various families which crowd the brand-new villas.

'May I ?' he says. 'So delighted !'

He ascends the stone steps, disappears through the open portal, and reappears in Myra's drawing-room, where the new books are scattered on sofa and tables, and the point-lace flounce displays itself half in and half out of a fairy work-basket lined with quilted rose-coloured satin. The newly-furnished apartment looks like a scene on the stage.

'How do you do ?' says Myra, stifling a yawn. She had been in a delicious dreamy reverie that was almost slumber when her listless gaze alighted on Lord Earlswood's white hat. 'What brings you to this quiet little place ?'

'You may well ask that. I think it would have been only friendly to let a fellow know where you were coming. I called in Bloomsbury-square. No one could tell me anything, except that you'd gone to some foreign watering place. It might be Ostend, or Boulogne, or Dieppe, or Biarritz, or Arcachon, or Jericho—no one knew. Went to the theatre—same result : meeting of the company announced for the 6th of October—that was all. It was Mrs. Lockstitch, your wardrobe woman, who put me on the right scent. She had made your dresses, and you had told her you wanted them in a quiet style for a quiet place. Hel—something, in Belgium. I looked up Murray, and found only one Belgian watering-place beginning with Hel ; and here I am. Clever, wasn't it ?'

'Pertinacious, at any rate,' replies Myra.

'Ah, that's the next best thing, if it isn't better. "It's doggedness does it." I came across that sentence somewhere the other day, and it took my fancy. I flatter myself there's a good deal of doggedness in my composition.'

'I thought you were grouse-shooting in the Highlands.'

'Everybody shoots grouse ; I don't.'

'You must be very anxious about your theatre,' says Myra, taking up the flounce, and doing a stitch or two, *point Turque*, with infinite precision.

'I don't care two straws about the theatre. Come, Mrs. Brandreth, you know that as well as I do. I built it for you, just as I might have sent you a box of bonbons on New Year's-day.'

'A princely bonbonnière. But I am glad Fortune has been kind, and that so far you have had interest for your money.'

'It's not very kind to talk in that business-like way when a fellow has come across from Dover to Ostend—the worst passage ever made—on purpose to see you.'

'Extremely kind on your part, but rather foolish; unless Heldenberg and the Belgians prove amusing enough to reward your devotion. What can you have to say to me, or I to you, that would not be just as well said a month hence?'

'I don't know about that. First and foremost, I came to see you. It's a pleasure to me even to sit here watching you stitching at that blue-calico-and-white-tape arrangement. And then, again, I've a little bit of news for you,' he adds, with a faint sparkle in his dull gray eyes. 'News that I thought might interest you—about a mutual friend.'

'What kind of news?' asks Myra, working industriously to cure her sleepiness.

'Well, I should call it—matrimonial.'

'Miss Belormond has had an offer from that sporting baronet who used to hang about the stage-door?'

'No.'

'Mr. Flanders, the low comedian, has married Minnie Walters—at last? I'm sure she has tried hard enough to bring it about, poor girl!'

'No.'

'Then I give it up.'

'Your friend, Mr. Westray—' begins Lord Earlswood slowly. The work drops from Myra's hands as she looks up at him.

'Well, what of him?'

'O, nothing very particular. His marriage is in yesterday's *Times*.'

'Some other Westray, perhaps.'

'No; Herman Westray. Here's the paper;' and his lordship produces a neatly-folded supplement. 'Herman Westray, only son of the late Reverend Thomas Westray of Colehaven, Devon. Editha, second daughter of Morgan Morcombe, Esq., Lochwith Priory, Radnorshire.'

'I rather expected it,' says Myra, with heroic composure. 'I have seen them together at the Frivolity.'

'O,' exclaims Earlswood, mortified, 'then you're not surprised.'

'Not particularly. If you crossed the Channel with the idea that you were bringing me a piece of astounding news, you have wasted your trouble.'

She is especially gracious to him after this; allows him to share her afternoon tea, discusses her plans for the coming season at the Frivolity, and dismisses him in the last stage of mystification. As by and by, alone in her pretty bedchamber, with its snow-white drapery and continental gimcrackery, she goes down on her knees at

raises her clasped hands, and takes an awful oath—not to the God of the Christians assuredly, who can hardly be supposed to receive such vows, but to Nemesis, or the three fatal sisters who deal calamity to man.

CHAPTER XVI.

'We'll live together, like two neighbour vines,
Circling our souls and loves in one another.
We'll spring together, and we'll bear one fruit ;
One joy shall make us smile, and one grief mourn ;
One age go with us, and one hour of death
Shall close our eyes, and one grave make us happy.'

HERMAN'S honeymoon fleets past him like a blissful dream. Life, which he had thought worn out and done with, save as a mere mechanical process, seems to have begun afresh for him—life and youth and happiness all renewed together like a second birth. Editha's companionship is so sweet in its utter novelty. This pure heart has so many treasures to lay at his feet. This innocent mind has such unknown deeps for him to sound. As her lover he had fancied that he knew all the wealth of her nature. As her husband he discovers a new world of thought and feeling which the girl had veiled from him.

Too bright, too fleet, too fair are those early days of their wedded life; like those radiant mornings which are apt to end in dull weather, the rose changing to gray, the sun vanishing behind angry clouds.

They have no thought of such change, these wedded lovers. Editha has no longer any doubt as to the perfection of her happiness. She sits by her husband one night while he writes a chapter of his novel, watches all the lights and shadows of the mobile face, which changes with his theme, and is beyond measure happy. It is as if she had actually a part in his work, in his thoughts, in his genius; and when he reads her the concluded chapter—ineffable condescension!—happiness beyond the power of language to express.

She writes to Ruth from a little Swiss village, a letter brimming over with joy, one of those honeymoon letters which we all receive occasionally from sister, or cousin, or familiar friend; a letter in which every sentence begins with 'Dear Herman,' 'Dear Herman thinks,' 'Dear Herman says,' 'Dear Herman hopes,'—a letter which illustrates all the weaknesses of woman, and all her virtues.

That bright month—not to be reckoned as other months in the calendar—comes to an end like a tale that is told, and the newly-married couple come home to the house at Fulham. Then come new pleasures, the simple joys of domesticity. Huge chests of linen, sent up from Lochwithian Priory, to be unpacked and put away. Wedding presents to be disposed judiciously about the rooms; no easy task, as these gifts are for the most part incongruous and of der-

ful taste—a pink-and-gold French clock and candelabra, for instance, which are an eyesore in that perfect drawing-room, whose pale green and white and tender lilacs are as delicate as a picture by Greuze.

Editha is enchanted with her new home. There is an artistic grace about the river-side villa, with its light airy rooms. Not numerous, but of a fair size. Messrs. Molding and Korness, not being harassed by interference from their customer, have surpassed themselves. There is nothing costly, or that strikes the observer as costly; no gilding, except the slenderest line of unburnished gold here and there; no sheen of satin or splendour of brocade; no vast expanse of looking-glass, confusing the sense with imaginary space. The Pompeian vestibule and dining-room are deliciously simple; encaustic tiles, unpolished ebony, cretonne draperies of purely classic design and rich subdued colour. The walls are painted a delicate French gray, relieved by a four-foot dado of ebonised panelling, and the ceiling of palest primrose. A broad border of ebonised wood surrounds the Venetian glass over the chimney-piece, and on this broad framework there are brackets supporting small bronze figures which might have been dug out of the lava that buried Herculaneum. A cretonne curtain divides the dining-room from a smaller chamber, looking upon the somewhat dingy byroad by which the villa is approached. This room has been lined from floor to ceiling on two sides with ebonised shelves for Herman's library, which is rather of the future than the present, his existing collection filling about a third of the space Messrs. Molding and Korness have allowed him; his desk, his reading-lamp, his chair, are perfection of their kind. A small sofa of classic design has been provided for Editha opposite her husband's writing-table; a stand with russia-leather portfolio suggests a collection of photographs, which may help her to while away an idle hour; a rustic work-table in a corner hints at stocking-mending and the sewing-on of shirt-buttons. Glass, china, all the details of housekeeping are in harmony with the pervading idea of the whole. Everything is artistic. The very beer-jugs are Etrurian; the urn is as purely Greek as that finely sculptured brazen vase from which Antigone poured her libation upon the dead.

The servants have been provided by the house-agent, and have been recommended as models of probity. They are cook, housemaid, and parlour-maid, and present a very fair appearance on the evening of Mr. and Mrs. Westray's arrival, congregated in the hall to carry in the boxes and travelling-bags—three smartly-dressed young women, whose starched muslin aprons are their only badge of servitude.

Now Editha begins her duties as matron and housekeeper, and all the small troubles and vexations of housekeeping on a limited scale gradually reveal themselves to her. After their first breakfast at home, when the rooms, and the cups and saucers, and the view from the windows, and the servants' faces are still as new to them as



they had just put up at a strange hotel, Herman gives his young wife twenty pounds and the daintiest little morocco account-book ever devised to make accounts fascinating.

'I think it will be wisest to pay the bills weekly, dear,' he says, 'and then we shall always know exactly how we stand financially. Do you think twenty pounds is enough for you to begin with?'

'O Herman, twenty pounds ought to last us ever so long; a month I should think. Twenty pounds used to last a long time at Lochwithian, though we had ten servants instead of three. Certainly papa paid all the large accounts quarterly, and we had a great deal from the home farm.'

'Here you will have to pay for everything. Bridge-end House produces nothing, not so much as a sprig of parsley to decorate the butter.'

On this first day Herman leaves his wife to face the responsibilities of her position alone. He has been away from London five weeks, and is anxious to see his publishers, to look in at his favourite club, and to ascertain in a general way how the world has wagged in his absence. Editha goes to the hall-door with him, and sees him depart with that faint touch of heart-sinking which young wives are subject to on such occasions. Throughout their honeymoon they have not lived an hour asunder. This is the beginning of stern reality. Editha lingers in the hall for a minute or two, contemplating the rather dull outlook from the window: a dwarfed hedge-row and level market-gardens stretching away towards Waltham Green; a church-spire and gray housetops in the distance; not so much as a mound of earth to relieve the dismal flatness of a cabbage- and asparagus-producing world. Then she screws her courage to the sticking-place, and penetrates those hidden and rearward premises of which she is nominal mistress, thinking that for this first day it will be wise to go to the cook, instead of summoning that functionary to an interview.

It is eleven o'clock by this time, and Mrs. Westray finds her establishment at luncheon, seated comfortably at the kitchen table with a substantial upstanding wedge of double gloucester, a quartern loaf, and the largest of the Etrurian beer-jugs before them.

They look somewhat disconcerted by her appearance, which they evidently regard as an intrusion. Cook wipes her mouth hastily and rises. She is a young woman, buxom and florid, with a look of having developed her figure upon buttered toast and hot suppers—a young woman with a sensual under-lip and a cunning eye. Housemaid and parlour-maid keep their seats. Very different this from Editha's welcome in the great old-fashioned kitchen at Lochwithian, where the cook and housekeeper of twenty years' service worshipped her, and the Welsh maidens smiled and curtsied as at the coming of a princess.

She discusses the dinner question. First, as the most important, cook has made bold to order the kitchen dinner already, to avoid loss of time. A nice little loin of pork and apple dumplings. 'The others like pork,' she says, with an air of self-abnegation. For the late dinner she suggests a pair of soles, a pair of fowls, and a small ham. 'Which Fullers the tea-grocer says he has some prime York 'ams at sixteenpence a pound, and I might make you a happle tart, mum, and a few custards.'

This dinner, though fair enough as a sample of the cook's capabilities, does not appear strikingly novel to Editha. Their honeymoon dinners have run very much upon roast fowl in those out-of-the-way Swiss hotels.

She racks her brains in the endeavour to think of something else; but saddles of mutton, fillets of veal, and fore-quarters of lamb are the only ideas that present themselves to her mind, and these are inappropriate to a *tête-à-tête* dinner.

'I think Mr. Westray would like a little game,' she hazards.

'You might have a brace of pheasants, mum, after the fowls.'

Four winged creatures to dine two people! There seems something wrong here.

'I should think one fowl and one pheasant would be quite enough,' says the young housekeeper.

'It might be *enough*, ma'am, but it wouldn't do credit to gentleman's table; and if master should 'appen to bring 'ome friend promiscuous, the dinner would look shabby; and I'm sure you wouldn't wish that—just at first too.'

'No, of course I don't wish that.'

So cook has her way, and Editha feels somehow that this first attempt is not good housekeeping; and yet she has kept her father's house with credit and renown from seventeen years of age upwards, has dealt out stores on a large and liberal scale, kept accounts, and been nominally mistress of everything.

But it is one thing to deal with old servants whose master's goods are as their own—who would shudder at the idea of diverting a loaf of bread or a basin of dripping from its proper use; who are as proud of the family they serve and as anxious for the family credit as if the same blood flowed in their veins, and the same good old race made honour a necessity of their being—and to have commerce with these sharp-witted London-bred girls, who look upon every new household they enter as a caravansera which they can leave at their pleasure, and domestic service as a means to the one great end of their existence, which includes good living, fine dress, and evenings out.

After her interview with the cook, Editha surveys the parlour-maid's pantry, which Messrs. Molding and Korness have made as perfect as a steward's cabin on board a modern steamship, but

which the young person who has charge of it pronounces dark and damp.

'And I'm afraid we shall be overrun with mice, ma'am, for I've heard them scuffling after dark. I suppose it's along of living so near the river,' adds the damsel, with a suppressed shudder.

The storeroom and china-closet are in one, filled with locked presses for linen and groceries. In one of these Editha and the two maids stow away the ample supply of house-linen, the making and marking of which, by the school-children of Lochwithian, it has been Ruth's pride to supervise. The grocery-closet Editha discovers will be useless, as the grocer calls every day for orders; and the cook assures her that it will be best and cheapest to order everything as it is wanted.

'I don't believe grocery would keep in them cupboards, mum, so near the river,' adds cook sagaciously; whereat Editha begins to understand that Father Thames is a friend to mice and inimical to grocery.

The grocery question settled, Mrs. Westray informs her household that she intends to pay all bills weekly, except such occasional supplies as can be paid for with ready money. She declares furthermore that she will require all accounts to be carefully examined and errors noted before they are submitted to her.

The cook seems somewhat to disapprove of weekly payments; her last master paid everything by cheque, half-yearly, she informs Editha, and evidently considers her last master's method the nobler of the two.

'But if you do intend to pay weekly, mum,' adds Jane the cook, with a sigh, 'there's a few little accounts I'd better give you at once.'

She searches a sauce-tureen or two and a vegetable-dish, which vessels contain reels of cotton, old letters, a dirty collar, small change, penholders, and various oddments appertaining to the three young persons who are good enough to accept a temporary shelter in Mrs. Westray's house. From one of these receptacles she produces half a dozen crumpled bills more or less greasy; and from these documents Editha discovers that the week preceding her arrival—during which the young persons have been settling down in their new service, and making believe to clean rooms which had never been soiled—has been a somewhat expensive period. There is a little bill from the baker, and a hieroglyphical paper from the butcher, the original obscurity of which has been made more obscure by grease. Editha just contrives to decipher that the young persons have consumed three shoulders of mutton and four loins of pork in the week, and that they have furthermore required suet and calves' liver. The grocer's bill is the most alarming, for the grocer is a monopolist in his way, and sells bacon, cheese,

eggs, and butter, as well as colonial produce. Blacklead, bathbricks, sweet oil, hearthstone, scouring-paper, housemaids' gloves, lucifer matches, gas tapers, brooms, brushes, and blacking mount up in a positively awful manner. Six pounds and three-quarters of butter have been indispensable as a provision for the four transparent rashers served at that morning's breakfast; nine pounds eleven ounces of double Gloucester have been necessary to start the kitchen, and a stilton has been ordered for the dining-room. Tea, coffee, sugar, rice, and tapioca have been laid in with equal liberality. There will be very little change out of a five-pound note from Mr. Fuller's grocer. Altogether Editha finds that her first payments will swallow up half of Herman's twenty pounds, and she has the satisfaction of hearing from the housemaid that more brooms, brushes, turkshees, furniture polishes, and Brunswick blacks are required before the house can be cleaned in a satisfactory manner.

This investigation of domestic affairs occupies some time, and then Editha goes up to her own pretty rooms and begins the business of unpacking. She has no maid—having insisted upon dispensing with that luxury in her new life, and being at all times independent of help—so the unpacking and arrangement of the trousseau takes a long time; so long that she has but a few minutes to write hurriedly to Ruth, announcing her establishment in her new home.

'You must come to me soon, darling,' she writes, 'if Dr. P. thinks you can bear the journey. I long so to see you, to tell you all about our Swiss tour, and how more than good dear Herman and I feel rather strange and lonely to-day in my new home, dear Herman having been obliged to go to town on business—about his new business, you know, dear. It seems so odd to see strange servants, instead of the kind friendly faces at Lochwithian. I have brought presents for all of them from Switzerland, which I shall send in the box with your clock and jewel-casket; the clock from me, the casket from Herman, his own choice. I think you will like the carving.'

After this letter has been written and despatched, the day seems rather to hang upon Editha's hands. The house, pretty as it is, has that new look which is not quite friendly. The impressions of Messrs. Molding and Korness's work is still upon it—the varnish too bright, the colours of the draperies too fresh. Editha cannot feel that it is home yet awhile; and then this first severance from Herman even for a few hours is a trial. By five o'clock in the afternoon he seems to have been away so long. She wonders that he has not contrived to settle all business matters, and come back in time to take her for a walk before dusk.

She goes into the garden, but on this dull October afternoon the Father Thames looks gloomy. A fog obscures the Surrey shore. A street-lamp, lighted too soon, shows dimly here and there among the cold gray houses. Everything is dull and cold. She walks

and down the gravel-path by the water, and looks over the low boundary at a wide reach of mud despondently, and wonders to find that so large a portion of this much-extolled river consists of a dark slimy filth, obnoxious to sight and smell.

She soon wearies of that narrow lawn and gravel-path, so different from the gardens at Lochwithian, and goes back to the house, where she tries to amuse herself by looking at Herman's library. This does not prove particularly interesting, being confined to books of reference, admirable in their way, and those standard works with which Editha is familiar. She takes out a volume of Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*, and tries to read; but her thoughts wander from the page, and she finds herself listening for Herman's return.

They are to dine at half-past seven. At six the parlour-maid brings her a wishy-washy cup of tea, and a thin slice of new bread thickly buttered. This refreshment fails to revive her spirits, and she finds herself lapsing into melancholy on this first day of her home life.

But at last, just as she comes down-stairs in her simple dinner dress, a latchkey sounds in the hall-door, and Herman appears. Happy meeting, fond welcome, as after a severance of years.

'Why, my love, you look pale and tired,' he says, as they go into the library together. 'You haven't been over-exerting yourself about domestic duties, I hope?'

'O no, dear; only—'

'Only what, my pet?'

'The day has seemed so long and dull without you.'

'Has it, darling?' he exclaims, pleased by the avowal. 'I oughtn't to have gone to town the first day, perhaps; only I was anxious to see Standish about my novel, and to hear what had been doing in the last six weeks. You went for a walk, I hope, dear?'

'What alone, Herman, in this strange place!'

'Ah, to be sure—you don't know the neighbourhood yet. There are some nice walks—Barnes Common, for instance, not above half an hour's walk from here; and Wimbledon, almost as near; I must show you them next week. And now I'll go and wash my hands for dinner. I've eaten no lunch, on purpose to do justice to our first home dinner.'

'I hope it will be nice, dear; but the cook is rather young. However, she seems to understand things, and is very confident.'

The table in the Pompeian chamber looks pretty enough, with the fragile modern glass and heavy old silver, the Squire's gift to his daughter, when Herman and his wife go in to dinner presently; but the dinner itself is a failure, and Herman resents the fact more intensely than Editha would have expected from a poet.

The soles are burned on the outside and pink within; the fowls are the oldest and toughest birds Herman has encountered for some

time, and Swiss poultry has not been always young; the half raw, hard, and salt; the pheasants are reduced to a *coque* in which the flesh crumbles off their bones; the bread is watery; the gravy is chiefly remarkable for grease, Lee and black pepper; the pastry is a leaden sarcophagus, in a few half-cooked apples are entombed; the custards are curdled happily, before they arrive at this stage of the feast, Herman spoiled an excellent appetite with a series of disappointments, and has retired within himself.

O, those nice little club dinners—so simple, so inexpensive! one whiting, crisp and of a golden brown, with his tail in his eye—delicate symbol of eternity; the longitudinal slice of roast beef, roasted by a cook who has elevated roasting to a science. It is not so practical as to count the cost of this first home dinner; he would find the account sadly against domesticity.

Soles	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	20	2
Fowls	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0	7
Ham	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0	13
Pheasants	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0	8
Gravy-beef, vegetables, eggs, butter, lard, and sundries	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0	5
Total										£1	16

His dinner at the club would have cost him three-and-sixpence, but then he cannot take Editha to a club, and it is an established principle in the British mind that to dine out of doors is against the best interests of domestic life.

'I am afraid you have not enjoyed your dinner, dear,' says nervously, when the parlour-maid, who is slow and awkward in her movements, has swept the last crumb from the tablecloth, withdrawn her attentive ear from Mr. and Mrs. Westray's conversation.

'We won't call it dinner, Editha. Everything was simple and pleasant. You must tell your cook so to-morrow; and if she is not better, you must dismiss her. There must be plenty of good food to be had, if you go the right way to work.'

Editha sighs. It seems a bad beginning somehow, insipid as the matter is to her mind. Herman drinks a couple of glasses of claret, conquers a disposition towards ill-temper, and they sit in the pretty little study, where there is a cheery fire on the 1st of October evening, and sit opposite each other on either side of the hearth like old-established married people, and Editha is content again.

They talk and talk, having such a boundless stock of information to impart to each other, that there seems no limit to the power of interesting conversation. Herman expounds his views on a variety of subjects; vague dreamy views, tricked out in a sentimental style. He tells his wife a little about his day in the

the people he has met, the news he has heard; not altogether edifying.

'I'm afraid it is a very wicked world you hear of at the clubs, Herman,' she says, shocked to learn that A.'s wife has run away with a Queen's Messenger; that there is a rumour of a judicial separation between Mr. and Mrs. B.; that C., after *menant grand train* for the last three years, has appeared in the *Gazette*; that D. has levanted on account of some unknown difficulty, which may be anything from flirtation to forgery.

'It is the best world we know of, my dear,' he answers calmly; 'and we can but make the best of it; get the most out of it; give it the least; trust it never; hope for little from its generosity; for nothing from its charity; and be sure that he who has the biggest mote in his own eye will be the first to spot the beam in ours. Yes, it is a wicked world undoubtedly, and, unluckily for the cause of morality, the wicked people in it are the pleasantest companions and do the kindest things.'

'You don't mean what you say, Herman!' exclaims his wife, horrified.

'Some of it, at any rate, dearest,' he answers carelessly. 'But I don't want to infect your innocent soul with my time-hardened notions. The world, you know, is fair enough—that smooth-faced, time-serving world which smiles upon the prosperous and well-placed. God forbid that you should ever test its metal with the acid of misfortune, or discover how the fine gold changes to dross in the crucible of adversity!'

Editha sighs. Worldly wisdom like this seems chilling after Ruth's gentle views of life, overflowing with hopefulness and charity.

'I think if you were to give me a good cup of tea, Editha, I might manage a chapter or two to-night,' says Herman, after a pause, during which he has been looking dreamily at the fire, and tasting the sweets of domesticity. It is sweet to him to sit by his own fireside, with Editha opposite him—to know that she is absolutely his own.

The young wife is delighted at that demand for tea. She rings, and the stately parlour-maid stalks in presently with the urn and caddy, the old-fashioned silver teatray, part of Editha's dower, and rosebud cups and saucers; and Editha is prettily busy for the next five minutes, while Herman goes on dreaming. His new book will be a success; his wife's delight in the chapters he has read to her seems to him a good angury. His comedy has been received with rapture by Mrs. Brandreth and her company, and only awaits the seal of public favour. Life smiles upon him as it has never smiled yet.

He has not seen Myra since his return to England. He has had some thoughts of calling at the theatre to-day, his piece being

already in rehearsal; but he has shrunk somehow from the notion of his first encounter with Mrs. Brandreth in his character of married man, and has deferred his appearance at the Frivolity till to-morrow, or possibly the day after, or perhaps next week; although he is quite aware that such postponement may result in one or two of his characters working out into something utterly alien to his idea of them, and some of his best speeches being in a manner read backwards.

'I'll write to Myra to-morrow, just to let her know that I have returned, and to give her my new address,' he thinks.

He is anxious about his comedy, but it would be a relief to him if his comedy could succeed without any meeting between him and Mrs. Brandreth.

Kismet is the name of the new play. Modern, domestic, intense almost to tragedy, and so far original that its author is unconscious of having borrowed anybody else's ideas.

The cup of tea is perfection, and in sipping that brain-clearing beverage Herman forgets that he has had a bad dinner. He talks of his book; his characters, and that awful crisis in their fate which now looms before him in the middle of the third volume; and thoroughly enjoys himself for the next half hour. And then the teacup is removed, the Sutherland table folded and put away, and the author seats himself at his desk; while Editha opens her workbasket, concentrates her attention upon point-lace, or seems to do, though after every group of stitches she looks up from her work, and watches the thoughtful face of the writer.

By and by she takes a volume of Coleridge—the Aldine edition—portable, clear of type—from Herman's classic bookshelf, and reads. Seated thus, with Herman opposite her, she knows weariness, though she has read nearly to the end of the volume before the writer looks up from his manuscript at the sound of the silver-tongued clock on the mantelpiece striking two.

'My dearest, what have I been doing to allow you to stay so long?' he exclaims. 'The native roses will soon fade if you keep me company in the small hours.'

'Let me stay, Herman,' she pleads. 'I am as foolish as David Copperfield's Dora, and I should be glad if I could hold you by the hand. It is so sweet to me to look up from my book now and then and watch your face, and fancy that I can follow the progress of your story there. Will you read me what you have just written?'

'Not to-night, love,' with a yawn. 'You shall read it for yourself in the printer's slips, and tell me the blemishes in my work. And now, wife of mine, I wonder whether your domestic handiwork would go far enough to give me a b.-and-s.'

The obedient wife flies to the cellaret; and for the first time in her life Squire Morcombe's daughter opens a soda-water

CHAPTER XVII.

* Était-ce un connaisseur en matière de femme,
 Cet écrivain qui dit que, lorsqu'elle sourit,
 Elle vous trompe, elle a pleuré toute la nuit ?

Je ne sais si jamais l'éternelle justice
 A du plaisir des dieux fait un plaisir permis ;
 Mais, s'il m'était donné de dire à quel supplice
 Je voudrais condamner mon plus fier ennemi,
 C'est toi, pâle souci d'un amour dédaignée,
 Dé-espérance misérable et qui meurs ignoré,
 Oui, c'est toi, ce serait ta lame empoisonnée
 Que je voudrais briser dans un cœur abhorré !

has been in rehearsal a fortnight before Herman makes
 parance on the dimly-lighted stage, where the actors are
 to give form and life to his creations, and to infuse
 of novelty into those well-worn types which the dramatic
 to employ, for want of power to evolve any new order
 in his inner consciousness.

androeth is on the stage, rehearsing without book, in
 pressed tone with which she keeps feeling and passion in
 ving her great effects—her fire and force and whirlwind
 for the performance. No one ever quite knows what
 is going to do till the first night of a new piece ;
 androeth herself least of all. Artist though she is, and
 she thinks out and elaborates every character, she is
 spontaneous. Some of her finest touches of art have
 at night, before her audience, in a flash, like inspiration.
 ment of the graceful form, every turn of the small classic
 ten studied with deliberation. Yet at the last moment
 flame out, and she electrifies her fellow-actors by some
 ted look or action which nothing less than genius could

rlswood sits across a chair, his arms folded on the back
 in reposing on his arms, his whiskers drooping languidly.
 fifth time he has assisted at the rehearsal of *Kismet*.
 e is an infliction which would be tolerated from no less
 in the owner of the theatre. He looks up as Herman
 ie wing, nods, and smiles thoughtfully, with a quick
 yra, who, with figure drawn to its fullest height, and
 plifted head, is denouncing the weak-minded lover who
 er, loving her all the while, but sacrificing love to
 lom.

ship looks from the author to the actress, wondering
 ill meet. He has not seen them together since the
 ay, when their evident enjoyment of each other's society

galled him considerably. He has long ago made up his mind that there is something more than friendship in Myra's regard for the companion of her girlish years, and he is anxious to see how she will take Mr. Westray's marriage. She received the news of it coolly enough, it is true, much to Lord Earlswood's surprise; but then women are so artful, and have such wondrous self-command. The actual presence of the faithless one may be more trying.

The act ends with that outburst of Myra's. Despite her suppressed tones there is a force in her utterance, and a meaning in her gestures which thrill the small audience watching her from the wing; and a little burst of spontaneous applause heralds the climax which is to bring down the curtain triumphantly upon act two.

'That licks *Hemlock*, anyhow,' says Lord Earlswood approvingly. 'Hang your classical rot! We had enough of that at Eton. We don't go to the theatre to be reminded of our juvenile canings and impositions. There's human interest here, passion, and what's-its-name? How d'ye do, Westray?'

At sound of the name Myra looks round. Pale, wearied with a three hours' rehearsal she has been for ever so long. If her cheek blanches now, the change is so slight as to escape even the watchful eye of jealousy glancing gloomily upward from beneath the bent brows of Lord Earlswood.

'At last!' exclaims Mrs. Brandreth, as she and Herman shake hands. 'I began to think that some one else must have written *Kismet*, and that you had only given us the use of your name for a consideration. You seem to take so little interest in the piece.'

'I knew I was in good hands,' says Herman.

'He was "married, and couldn't come." Hlaw!' cries his lordship.

'How much of the rehearsal have you heard?' asks Mrs. Brandreth.

'Only the last half-dozen speeches. Nothing could be better. You will be magnificent in the close of that act. How d'ye do, Miss Belormond?' acknowledging that young lady's nods and becks and wreathed smiles.

'How well you are looking!' says Myra, in her friendliest manner; a frankly gracious friendliness that is new to Herman, and which relieves him of certain anxieties that have made this first visit to the Frivolity in some wise a trial. 'Switzerland has agreed with you. You look ten years younger than on that delightful day at Ascot.'

'And yet I was very happy on that day,' replies Herman, moved to gallantry by her kindness. A married man has such an agreeable sense of freedom. He can say the sweetest things with impunity.

'I think we might call the third act for to-morrow,' interjects

stage-manager, a gentleman who wears spectacles and his hat on to the back of his head, and has an oppressed and careworn mance, as of one whose burden is greater than he can bear.

'Yes,' replies Myra; 'the first and second go pretty smoothly

Mr. Scruto wants to show you his model for the second act,' the stage-manager, 'if you're not in a hurry to go.'

The rehearsal is over, but the actors linger, curious to hear anything that Herman may have to say; not that they intend to accept or reject, good, bad, or indifferent, having already made up their minds as to their interpretation of his play.

Herman and Myra talk over the comedy, while Lord Earlswood sits backwards and forwards on his chair, and Mr. Delmaine, the stage-manager, roams about distractedly, bawling some direction here and there now and then at one of the wings or up to the flies, as he comes hoarse answering shouts from invisible sources. Her-
 spirit has risen wonderfully since he came in at the stage-

He discusses his play with vivacity, suggests a good deal, shows his supreme confidence in Myra's taste and experience.

They talk of the piece, and nothing but the piece, for some time, then, having quite exhausted that subject, Myra says, in a subdued tone:

'I must not forget to offer you my congratulations on your marriage.'

'I saw Miss Morcombe with you one night when we were at Hemlock. She is very lovely. You have reason to be proud

'I am proud of her,' answers Herman. 'She is as good as she is beautiful.'

'You will let me know her some day, I hope.'

'I shall be very glad,' replies Herman; although half an hour ago he would have deemed such an introduction the wildest imprudence.

'She is already one of your most enthusiastic admirers, and she has only seen you once.'

'I saw how much she was interested in the play,' says Mrs. Brandreth; 'but I put that down to her interest in the author.'

'You did not know—'

'No, but I could see.'

Hereupon arrives Mr. Scruto the scene-painter, with his neat cardboard model of the set for act two. Nothing can be more perfect in its way. It represents the garden of a villa at Nice, with the Ionian sea beyond, and an angle of the villa occupying one side of the foreground. The open windows reveal the pretty salon, and in and out of these windows the *dramatis personee* are to be seen.

Mr. Scruto's work is praised, a suggestion or two made by Mr. Brandreth, and approved by Mrs. Brandreth, and then the whole

business of rehearsal is over. The prompter's boy puts up the call for to-morrow :

Kismet, act three, at 11.
Ladies of the Ballet.

Which latter announcement means that guests are to meander in and out during the last scene of the play. Mrs. Brandreth has a knack of training her ballet ladies to look like real flesh and blood, and even patrician flesh and blood. She shows them how to group themselves, how to fall into natural attitudes, to sit or stand, to take up one of the showy volumes on a table and seem really to examine its illustrations, to exchange little friendly greetings with one another, and, above all, not to abandon themselves to vacant contemplation of the audience. In the matter of gloves, shoes, hairdressing, and all small details, Madame Vestris herself could not have been more exacting. 'And mind,' says the arbitrary Myra, 'I will have no lip-salve used in this theatre, making your mouths look as if you were in the last stage of scarlet-fever; and no hair-pinning.'

This mysterious phrase is fully understood by the young ladies to whom it is addressed. It simply means that the use of a smoke-blackened hairpin, by which some fair *coryphées* intensify the lustre of their eyes, is forbidden at the Frivolity.

The result of this wise tyranny is a happy one. Very fair and fresh are the faces of Mrs. Brandreth's *corps de ballet*, while many a hard-working young woman learns the elements of good acting from Myra's judicious instructions.

Herman goes home that day with a mind quite at ease. He had dreaded the effect of his marriage upon Myra, weakly and foolishly perhaps, since he was not responsible for any fancies of hers. It is an infinite relief to him to find that she can take matters easily, and even ask to be presented to his wife.

'It would have been difficult to keep those two apart if I am to go on writing for the Frivolity,' he muses; 'but I don't think that there's any danger in their meeting. Myra will be sensible enough not to be too confidential with my wife.'

He remembers his conversation with Editha on the rocky margin of the Pennant, and he feels very sure that his young wife would care to accept among her acquaintance that other who jilted him years ago. He trusts to Mrs. Brandreth's discretion, however, and would not for worlds warn her against any revelation of the past.

The first night of *Kismet* comes after three more weeks of laborious preparation, and day and night rehearsals during the last week, and the last two of these full dress, with lights and scenery and properties as on the night of performance. In a word, Mrs. Brandreth rehearses a modern comedy—which pretends to be an

lectual effort—as carefully as a provincial manager of the first rehearses his Christmas pantomime.

The plot of the play is simple, but affords large scope for passion. Estella Bond, a girl of humble birth and position, has been engaged to Paul Mortmain, a young man of family; they have loved with intensity, and have felt themselves intended for each other by fate. Paul, by a sudden turn of Fortune's wheel, has all at once become possessed of large wealth; whereupon, urged by a worldly swindler, who shows him that the promised wife of Paul Mortmain, the nobody, is no fitting mate for Paul Mortmain, master of great Mortmain estates, he deserts his betrothed, first executing her of gift which is to give her independence.

Her first use of independence is to educate herself to the level of her false lover; her second, to transfer the twenty thousand pounds he has bestowed upon her to the Asylum for Superannuated Servants.

'I have education now,' she says, 'and can fight the battle of life!' She seeks an engagement as governess or companion; obtains the latter capacity with Mrs. Wilding, a young widow resident at Nice; arrives at the widow's villa, and finds that the widow is disposed to sink that title for wife, the husband in view being Paul Mortmain.

Mrs. Wilding, lovely, weak, aristocratic, and gushing, confides in Estella, who, on her part, contrives to avoid encountering Paul Mortmain, till a happy stage accident brings them face to face at the end of the second act, and evokes from Estella a withering denunciation of the man's meanness, a scathing repudiation of his false generosity—his twenty thousand pounds, which have gone to solace the declining days of women who have known enough of the worthlessness of men's love and the hollowness of men's oaths to refer to toil, helplessness, solitude, dependence—ay, starvation—to the bitterness of disappointed hopes and a broken heart that has been led and been deceived.'

She pours a flood of angry passion upon her lover's shame-bowed head; every stage of that long speech, broken only by interjunctive remonstrances from the lover, rises in intensity, wavers from tenderness, from anger to love—yet always mounting in passion—till the final words which bid him leave her, and forget her, he has ever loved or ever wronged her, as she from that hour blot his name and image from her mind. Little perhaps in the plot of the play: only that skilful use of old materials which marks the originality of the nineteenth century; but the language is forcible and eloquent, and the acting has the fire of true genius. That final act stamps the success of *Kismet*.

'I said there was go in it,' remarks Lord Earlswood, contemplating the ruin of his gloves, which he has split in the storm of

applause that greeted Myra's recall. 'The fellows in the stalls like to see two women quarrelling about one man. It's agreeable to masculine self-esteem. Haw!'

The third act shows Paul Mortmain's impassioned pursuit of the woman he has wronged. He has been false to his destiny in leaving her. His old fancy about fate has never quite left him. Nothing has gone well with him since his desertion of Estella. His favourite horse has thrown him viciously; he has taken a fever while electioneering in his county town, and has escaped Death's clutch by the skin of his teeth. Wealth has proved something less than happiness. He now humiliates himself before the woman who once loved him; but she tells him love died with the death of respect. He is no more to her than the strangers she passes in the streets. Let him marry the lovely widow who adores him.

'Butterflies are fond of flowers,' replies Paul. 'I would as soon have the butterfly's love as the widow's—their brain-power must be about equal.'

'You have wronged me,' says Estella; 'you shall not wrong her. You have broken your promise to me; you must keep your promise to her. Prudence as well as honour demands it. No man can be twice disloyal with impunity.'

Estella leaves him in the widow's boudoir, which is the scene of this last act. He seats himself at Mrs. Wilding's davenport, and writes his final appeal to his old love, not without a contemptuous allusion to the volatile widow, who has taken his fancy captive for a while, but never touched his heart. This letter, written with passionate haste, is blotted in Mrs. Wilding's blotting-book. She enters immediately upon Paul's exit, sees the disturbed state of the davenport, the papers thrown about, the pens ruthlessly scattered, and is attracted by the thick black impression on the blotter. 'Paul's hand!'

She is curious enough to tear out the sheet of blotting-paper and hold it up to the light, and there reads disjointed sentences of Paul's letter.

He returns just as she has locked the evidence of his perfidy in the secret drawer of the davenport, returns with a letter in his hand of his own, sent back unopened by Estella, who is on the point of leaving for England.

In his anger with his first love he returns to his second. He throws himself at Laura's feet, tells her that in her innocent and gentle nature he has found the balm for an old wound that has pierced deep, but is not incurable—offers her that milk-and-water infatuation which men who have squandered all their wealth of emotion upon the idol of their youth generously bestow on the consoler of their riper years; but offers it with such fever and energy as might pass current for genuine passion.

Paul fools him to the top of his bent, hears all he has to say, and shows him the blotting-paper. Satisfied with his humiliation, he is generous and womanly enough to help him.

'Estella loves you,' she says; 'I guessed her secret the day you read it in her face. My suspicions had been awakened by her avoidance of you, and I brought about that unexpected result in order to test you both. I saw enough in those few moments of surprise and agitation to convince me that I had never read your heart, that she had never lost it.'

He goes on to suggest that he shall pretend to have received a letter announcing that the whole of his fortune has been engulfed in a bank failure. He shall seem to be reduced at a moment to his position of dependence on a precarious profession, the exercise of which he has abandoned long enough to have lost much of his old capital and all his old patrons.

He puts this plan into execution with some dexterity, aided by the comic characters, whose comedy enlivens the scene; and Estella, too, determined to the last, at the moment of starting for the railway-station, hears that her lover is a pauper, and hears him insulted and abused by Mrs. Wilding, who pretends to exult in his fall.

This undeserved humiliation moves her more than all. In a burst of passion she turns upon Laura, denounces her unwomanly conduct, and then flings herself upon Paul's breast, whereat the happy-dispositioned widow breaks into a peal of rippling laughter, and Estella learns that she has been duped.

The play—with its light-comedy underplot—ends in every-body's happiness, as a stage-play should end, and Mrs. Brandreth's is one of those signal triumphs which make an actress's

Editha and her husband have watched the play together, seated side by side in the snug little stage-box, and not once has Herman left his wife throughout the performance, anxious as he may have been to slip behind the scenes and hear what the actors think of the success of each act. He has kept his place by Editha, who has sat and listened almost breathlessly, from the first line to the last, with an anxiously-beating heart. It is the first time she has been so at any triumph of Herman's, and her cheek glows and her heart quickens as she turns to him at the fall of the curtain.

'I am so glad, Herman,' she says, in her low sweet voice. That

'Do you really like the piece, dear? That's right. The house is so loudly noisy, isn't it? But these first nights are so delusive. There is an electric current of good-nature circulating among the audience. Even the critics applaud heartily, you see, and yet perhaps some of them will go home and abuse the play.'

Lord Earlswood and Mr. Lyndhurst come into the box to congratulate the author and to be presented to the author's wife, and Herman, whether he likes it or not, has to admit Hamilton Lyndhurst to the roll of Editha's acquaintance. A thing hardly to be avoided anyhow, as Lyndhurst is always to the fore in literary and artistic circles, and is made much of by those very people whose society is most agreeable to Herman.

'Dooood well little Walters plays the widow,' says Lord Earlswood; 'the first time she's ever risen above your waiting-maid business. Brandreth taught her every bit of business, every look and tone; almost made a lady of her, in short. It was wonderful to see her train that slangy little beggar. That laugh was Brandreth's. She taught little Walters note by note. Finest thing in drilling I ever saw; they used to go at it for a quarter of an hour at a stretch; I heard 'em one morning.'

'How clever Mrs. Brandreth must be, and how patient!' says Editha warmly. She is grateful to the actress whose art has helped Herman to achieve success.

Hamilton Lyndhurst looks at her curiously. Herman has just slipped out of the box, and gone behind the scenes to congratulate Myra, as in duty bound.

'Yes, Mrs. Brandreth is clever,' assents Lyndhurst, in his tranquil legato tones; 'one of the cleverest women in London, and a woman whose genius is always undergoing development. She has given the world some startling proof of her cleverness before she has done with it.'

'I think she has given sufficient evidence of her genius by to-night's performance,' replies Editha. 'And what exquisite taste she has shown in every detail! Herman has reason to be grateful to her.'

'And no doubt is—eminently grateful; authors always are,' says Lyndhurst. 'There's hardly a manager in London whose dinner-table is not resplendent with the tributary epergnes and claret-jugs of grateful dramatists.'

'Nice taste in colour, hasn't she?' asks Earlswood, still singing Myra's praises. 'Nothing in the draperies or dresses to set one's teeth on edge.'

'Pearly grays, changeful opals, amaranth, and primrose—gentle reposeful tints that remind one of Leighton's pictures,' says Lyndhurst.

'How do you like the moral of your husband's play, Mrs. Westray?' asked Lord Earlswood. 'It has a moral, I suppose?'

'“There is no moral, little or big, in the *Iliad*,”' says Lyndhurst, quoting De Quincey. 'The greatest works of literary art have been innocent of moral teaching. Mr. Westray's play inculcates no moral, but it illustrates a universal truth. A man can love

honestly but once in his life ; all after feeling is mere imitation of the first and only genuine passion. The French mind has a knack of telling the secrets of humanity in a touch-and-go proverb: *On revient toujours à ses premiers amours.*'

A look of distress clouds Editha's face for a moment.

'I don't think my husband would agree with you upon that question, Mr. Lyndhurst,' she answers gravely.

'And yet he has written *Kismet*, which deifies first love, and degrades a second attachment to mere fancy and foolishness,' says Lyndhurst lightly. 'I leave you to examine him as to his intentions, Mrs. Westray, and arrive at his real meaning if you can.'

Editha listens with a disquieted heart. Has not Herman confessed, with praiseworthy frankness, that his first love has not been given to her? And here in this stage-play of his own writing—and it may be that a man unconsciously and involuntarily reveals his convictions through his art—Herman has shown her that first love is a thing imperishable, immortal as the soul which it illumines with its divine fire.

'Could I ever love any one else as I love him?' she asks herself.

'If we were parted to-morrow, and I were to live half a century, would his image ever be faded, or his influence upon my life be lessened? True love is above time or change.'

She remembers that her lover has described that first attachment of his as something less than pure love. Here is a loophole for hope.

Lord Earlswood retires presently, and follows Herman to the greenroom. Hamilton Lyndhurst remains until Herman's return. He has a knack of making himself agreeable to women of every rank, from a dowager duchess of seventy to a *lionne* of the *Château de Fleurs* or *Jardin Mabille*, and he contrives to make his conversation pleasing to Editha in this quarter-of-an-hour *tête-à-tête*. He shows her the notabilities among the audience, an attention which Herman's natural anxiety for the success of his play has prevented his paying his wife. Mr. Lyndhurst knows everybody, and can say something amusing about everybody—not always the most good-natured thing that can be said of a fellow human creature, but always said with an easy good-natured air, which takes the sting out of sarcasm.

Editha listens with a certain interest, yet with some degree of constraint. Mr. Lyndhurst belongs to that new world to which her husband has admitted her; a world in which all man's loftiest feelings and moral qualities seem absolutely at a discount; a world in which to be clever and get the better of one's neighbour appears the one positive virtue; a world in which every man and woman exists for his or her own exclusive benefit, and bends every faculty to one relentless pursuit, individual advantage; a world in which every

traveller glides along a single line of rail to his own particular terminus, and regards the comfort and well-being of all other wayfarers as a question remote from the purpose of his being, a subject upon which philanthropists may squander their superfluous energies, and by means of which loud-mouthed agitators may bring themselves into notice.

Herman comes back to the box looking radiant. The actors are delighted with the piece, and pronounce it a greater success than *Hemlock*.

'You shall have your victoria next week, darling,' he whispers to Editha.

Carriage or no carriage is a question that has been discussed between Mr. and Mrs. Westray more than once during the last three weeks. Herman does not like to see his wife deprived of a luxury to which she has been accustomed. Editha pleads on the side of prudence. She is anxious to be a prudent economical wife, and she feels that existence in the Fulham villa is more expensive than it ought to be, and that her notions of housekeeping, as illustrated in her dealings with Jane the cook, are somewhat weak and shadowy.

Herman is in such good humour with all the world that he forgets his old idea of Mr. Lyndhurst as an acquaintance to be dropped after his marriage, and invites that gentleman to dinner.

'Come to us to-morrow, if you've nothing better to do,' he says; 'I've asked Mrs. Brandreth. She is dying to know you, Editha. To-morrow will suit you, I suppose, won't it, dear?'

'To-morrow is Sunday, you know, Herman.'

'Of course. Sunday is the only day she can come to us. I hope your cook will manage to give us an eatable dinner; or perhaps it would be better to go to the Star and Garter. It would be a pleasant drive down to Richmond, wouldn't it, Lyndhurst?'

'The Star and Garter by all means, rather than inflict trouble upon Mrs. Westray,' replies Lyndhurst. 'Let the dinner be my affair as well as yours, Westray; and we may as well ask some more people. Little Miss Walters, for instance—a most amusing beg—a very estimable young lady, Mrs. Westray—and Earlswood. He'll be awfully savage at being shut out if Brandreth comes.'

'I asked Earlswood just now. He comes in any case.'

Editha turns to her husband with that serious look of *the* which impressed him at their first meeting—that expression which he then called strong-mindedness.

'I shall be very happy to receive your friends in our own home, Herman, even on Sunday,' she says; 'but I certainly would not go to an hotel to dine upon a Sunday evening.'

'Don't you think that's a distinction without a difference, Mrs. Westray?' asks Lyndhurst. 'You are fond of social straw-splitt—'

in the country. However, I, for my part, shall esteem it a greater honour to dine with you in your own house than anywhere else.'

'So be it. Seven o'clock to-morrow then, Lyndhurst. You know Bridge-end House?'

'Perfectly.'

'We're almost neighbours of yours, by the way.'

'Within a stone's throw.'

Mr. Lyndhurst accompanies Mrs. Westray to her carriage, and watches it depart.

'She reminds me of Clarissa Harlowe,' he says to himself, as he stands waiting for his brougham, 'and is at least a century behind the age she lives in. But she is just the one fresh, fair, unspotted, and perfect woman it has been my lot to meet. For such a woman as that I would turn virtuous, and eschew cakes and ale.'

'I wish we could avoid Sunday dinner-parties, Herman,' Editha says gently, as they drive away from the theatre.

'We can't, dear, while we live in civilised society.'

The honeymoon is over, and the husband answers with marital authority.

'We'll go to Long-acre on Monday, darling, and choose your carriage,' he says guiltily, putting his arm round his wife's waist.

'Dear Herman, it is so good of you to think about it; but I can do very well without a carriage. And unless you are quite sure you can afford it—'

'I can afford it easily. The success of *Kismet* will put hundreds in my pocket; and instead of walking about the dull old Pallham lanes, you shall drive in Hyde Park, or to Richmond or Wimbledon.'

'What is the moral of *Kismet*, Herman?' Editha asks irrelevantly.

'Moral, my dear! I don't think there is a moral.'

'Yet it seems to mean, Herman, if it means anything, that a man can love only once. Paul thinks he is cured of his first love, but the end shows that first love is destiny.'

'Of course. When it is real love, like mine for you.'

'But I am not your first love, Herman. You have confessed much.'

'I have confessed that you are not the first woman who ever seemed charming in my sight; not the first woman I ever made love to. But you are the first I have ever deeply and really loved.'

'Are you sure of that, dearest?'

'Very sure. As sure as I am that we can afford a victoria, and that the wretched female who calls herself a cook will spoil the dinner to-morrow.'

CHAPTER XVIII.

'The happiness of life is made up of minute fractions—the little, soon forgotten charities of a kiss, a smile, a kind look, a heartfelt compliment in the disguise of playful raillery, and the countless other infinitesimals of pleasurable thought and genial feeling.'

HERMAN'S prophecy about the dinner is not unrealised. Jane the cook has not been dismissed abruptly, as he desired. She is a young person of eminently respectable appearance, who seems good-natured, and anxious to please. She has wept at any allusion to warning, and appealed to Editha's soft-heartedness. She has declared piteously that no former master ever complained of her cooking, and she has thrown the burden of all her shortcomings upon that mute offender, the kitchen-range. No one—not a professed cook at seventy guineas a year—could send up a decent dinner from such a range. It is a range of demoniac inconsistency, and will roast the joint to a cinder and leave the poultry half raw. It will send up stony-hearted potatoes and reduce cauliflowers to a watery pulp. It will dry macaroni to chips, yet hardly afford heat enough to penetrate a pair of soles.

Jane declares with tears that the range is preying upon her mind, and that she can't sleep for thinking of it. The housemaid, who happens to be Jane's first cousin, sustains her relation's statement. 'Them open ranges ain't a bit of use, mum,' she says. 'You scarcely see 'em anywhere's now, since the kitchingers have come up.' So Editha informs her husband that she fears they will never get on without a new kitchen-stove, though with inward wonder how the great open fire at Lochwithian had contrived to cook everything so nicely, with aid from the charcoal hot-plate only on state occasions; and Herman, ever careless about household trifles, calls at Molding and Korness's *en passant*, and tells them to send him in the best thing in kitcheners. The article is out of their line, perhaps, but they can order it from the proper people.

The kitchener being set, with a good deal of dirt, muddle, and general upheaving of the kitchen department, proves itself curiously imitative of the superseded range. The potatoes still exhibit a tendency to stony-heartedness; the cauliflowers are still pulpy; the soles make up in grease what they want in cooking.

Editha gently suggests that the looked-for improvement has not yet shown itself.

Jane has recourse to the corner of her white apron—a very clean girl, Jane, in the matter of aprons—and protests that no master ever was so hard to please as Mr. Westray.

'But really, Jane, the fish *was* underdone. I tried to eat myself, but couldn't.'

'You see, mum, a new kitchener never works quite right; when

I get to know my stove it will be different. Leastways, if master has got the right kind of stove. I can't say as I quite hold with this one.

Happily for Mr. and Mrs. Westray, their guests upon this particular Sunday evening are not people who care very much whether their dinner be good, bad, or indifferent. Lord Earlswood is entirely without gastronomical taste or refinement; Hamilton Lyndhurst is learned in the nicest shades of high-art cookery, but is able, when he finds himself face to face with a badly-cooked dinner, to suspend his appetite in a manner, satisfy the mere cravings of nature with the wing of a fowl and his dinner-roll, and put off the actual process of dining till to-morrow; Mrs. Brandreth is too *spirituelle* to care for the pleasures of the table; and Barkly Tolleny, the dramatic critic, who makes up the small party, is an intellectual giant, who takes whatever is set before him in the way of meat or drink with a serenity which is the distinguishing characteristic of himself and his writing.

Myra has never been more charming than on this occasion. There is a repose and refinement in her manner which is different from the received idea of a comedy-actress. She wears black velvet, high to the throat, with ruffles of old guipure; a pearl pendant, and a single pearl in each small ear, are her only ornaments. In this dress her graceful figure and aristocratic head appear to perfection, and Editha thinks her handsomer in this softly-lighted room than last night in the glare of the footlights.

The two women get on pretty well together on this first meeting, though they have few thoughts in common. Editha thanks the actress for her exquisite impersonation of Herman's heroine, and they talk a good deal of his dramatic works, past, present, and to come. But of the past—of those youthful days when she and Herman were playfellows, neighbours, friends, and ultimately lovers—Myra says not one word. Time enough to speak of that unforgotten past when the hour for such revelation ripens. To-night Mrs. Brandreth obtains credit for tact and kindly feeling by this wise reticence. Any allusion to his early manhood would have been painful to Herman, and he is grateful to Myra for her discretion.

Mrs. Brandreth contemplates the small household with an eye that notes every detail. The ill-cooked dinner, the slow service which lengthens its humiliation, gratify her angry soul; for she sees Herman's irritation, and knows that such petty vexations are sometimes strong enough to weaken the bonds of love. She sees Editha's woe-stricken look when the turkey poult crumbles off his bones under the carving-knife, as if he had been discovered at some banquet-table at Pompeii, and lapsed into dust at exposure to the upper air. She notes the many small annoyances which vex the husband, the

secret anxieties of the wife, and tells herself that life's honeymoon is over.

'Foolish people!' she thinks. 'If they lived at an hotel and dined at a *table d'hôte*, they might go on being turtle-doves for the next ten years. Bad servants and an ill-managed house will estrange them more surely than the treachery of false friends.'

Dinner once done with, its manes appeased with a glass of marschino or chartreuse, and a bottle of burgundy circulating among the four gentlemen, the evening is pleasant enough. Mr. Tollemey is in good form, and talks metaphysics in a manner which delights Herman and sorely puzzles Editha. Where, in that region of abstract thought to which Mr. Tollemey soars after his second glass of chambertin, is there a place for the simple creed which has made life—and the dim world beyond life—so sweet to her thoughts, so easy of comprehension, so straight and clear and good? That Mr. Tollemey talks well, and that Herman and he understand each other, she knows; but when she tries to follow them, she feels like one lost in some shadowy wood, where unclean things lurk among the undergrowth, and may start out upon her at any moment.

Lyndhurst tries to interest her, but fails. She is listening to Herman. In her abstraction she forgets that it is time for her to rise, until, looking across at Mrs. Brandreth, she sees a shade of weariness on that lady's face, Lord Earlswood's conversation not being particularly interesting, and is reminded of her duties as hostess.

The two ladies retire to the drawing-room, where numerous wax-candles twinkle gaily in crystal sconces against the walls, and where there is abundance of old china, photographs, and flowers to admire, Herman being in the habit of bringing home pretty things, and not being thoughtful enough in financial matters to consider that these perpetual droppings of stray sovereigns and five-pound notes will wear away the most substantial income.

Again the talk is of Herman and dramatic art. The open piano suggests music, and Editha plays a sacred air of Mendelssohn's with perfect feeling. Mrs. Brandreth declines when asked to play or sing.

'I know no sacred music,' she says. 'I fear you would be shocked if I were to sing a French ballad or a German student's song, and those are the only airs I have at my fingers' ends.'

Editha does not say she would not be shocked, so the subject drops, until the gentlemen appear, when Lord Earlswood pleads warmly for Chaumont's famous ballad, 'La première Feuille,' and Herman entreating also, Mrs. Brandreth apologises to Editha, and sings deliciously that most bewitching of chansons.

The gentlemen implore her not to leave the piano till she has sung something else, and she obeys with a pretty deprecating air.

sings a fine patriotic song, to be found in books of Volkslieder, 'Ich is the German's Fatherland?' She sings it with a dash of spirit that delight her auditors. Mr. Tollemey's gray head leans enthusiastically over the piano, and the four gentlemen join in chorus:

'O nein, O nein, O nein!
Sein Vaterland muss grösser sein!'

When Myra has risen from the piano, Hamilton Lyndhurst seats himself unasked, strikes a few chords, and sings a little love song in a noblest baritone voice that Editha has ever heard.

This is Mr. Lyndhurst's one gift, and he possesses that gift in a relative degree. Few professional singers of the day who would fear such a rival. While the deep rich voice dwells on the sad words, with perfect enunciation of every syllable, Editha feels that it is Sunday evening, and that Shelley is a bard who hardly find a place among Hymns Ancient and Modern.

Lyndhurst looks up at the fair grave face, and sees that rapt expression which bespeaks a listener with a soul for melody.

'Come,' he says, 'I'll sing something better than Shelley for Mrs. Westray.'

He sings 'Rock of Ages,' as that sublime hymn has been rarely sung in a drawing-room; sings as with religious fervour; sings with ample intensity of feeling that brings a flood of tears to Editha's eyes.

He sees her turn away and hide her face in her handkerchief, smiles gravely to himself as he bends over the piano, playing closing chords softly, slowly, with a dying fall. And not a note will he sing to-night, though Myra entreats for a song of Blüthen's.

'There's comfort still, she is assailable,' he says to himself.

It is after midnight when the guests depart, and when Herman comes back to the drawing-room he finds Editha standing by the fire with a thoughtful face.

'Herman,' she begins, with ever so slight a tremulousness of voice, 'I must ask you not to give any more Sunday dinner-parties. I have always went to evening service at Lochwithian, and I should like to do the same here. Will you mind very much if we dine at six on Sundays, and invite our friends on any other day but Sunday?' 'Why?' 'By?'

Herman shrugs his shoulders. He sees that his wife is very serious in earnest. That strong-mindedness he dreaded has come out of her. He remembers what Dewrance said about their unfitsness for each other, and has an uncomfortable feeling that they are on the threshold of their first quarrel.

'My dear love,' he says, 'to deprive me of the right to invite my friends on Sunday is to sever me from some of my pleasantest associations. There is Tollemey, for instance, one of the cleverest men

I know, and a most valuable ally. You'll see how *Kismet* will be reviewed in the *Day Star* to-morrow. Now Sunday is Tolley's great day for dining with his friends. He prefers the *sans gêne* of his club on week-days.'

'And are we to profane the Sabbath, Herman, because Mr. Tolley likes dining out on that day, and will praise your play in the *Day Star*? Isn't that buying his good word at the price of principle?'

'I was not brought up in Glasgow, and have no Sabbatarian leanings,' answers Herman, pale with anger. 'As for influencing Tolley, you don't know what you are talking about. He is a man whose society is only too much in request, and who does me honour when he consents to eat an ill-cooked dinner in my house. By the way, that woman must go to-morrow, Editha, if you wish me to dine at home.'

'If I wish you to dine at home! Herman, how can you say that? It is not very much that I ask—only that we may have no more Sunday dinner-parties. When I thought of the peaceful Sunday evenings at Lochwithian, the quiet little church, the simple earnest congregation, Mr. Petherick's kind voice and thoughtful teaching, full of faith and hope, and all that is brightest in religion, and heard you and Mr. Tolley talking of that last book which has tried to argue Christianity into a fable, I felt as if I had fallen from a happy God-fearing world into the company of sceptics and infidels.'

'My dear Editha, if you would think more of the dinner and less of the after-dinner conversation, you would be a better wife for a literary man who has his way to make in the world,' replies Herman, stifling a yawn as he lights his chamber candle. 'I wonder what the *Day Star* will say of *Kismet*!'

THE CONFESSIONS OF AN ENGLISH CHLORAL-EATER

* Dr. Farquharson thought Mr. Hulke's case interesting, not only on account of the case, but also because there is a great deal of what might be called chloral-eating, as analogous to opium-eating, at the present time. Mr. Hulke, in replying to the observations made, said that he knew no antidote to chloral.—From the *Lancet* of Dec. 5, 1874, p. 802.

In writing the following confessions I think I am performing a duty which I owe to society, firmly believing that no one has a right to keep any knowledge to himself the promulgation of which may perhaps benefit the community at large; and I do so in the sincere hope that it may save not a few from one of the most lingering and painful of all deaths, and avert misery and ruin from many a family in England.

Prefatorily, I ought to say that within the last three or four years a new stimulant has been introduced into the country, and is gaining ground, viz. hydrate of chloral, and a new class of drunkards has been the consequence.

I need not describe the horrid drug farther than to say it is a sort of a burning pungent taste, having a great affinity for water; its basis is chloroform, into which it is supposed to be changed in the blood. In small doses it is stimulant and antispasmodic; in larger, narcotic; while an over-dose produces death as instantaneously as a flash of lightning. Like opium, the dose must be constantly increased to keep up the same effects. The results of a smaller dose of the drug on a chloral-eater—and why I say 'on a chloral-eater' is, because the medical profession (to which I myself belong) often err in judging of the actions of certain kinds of stimulant narcotics, such as opium, Indian hemp, &c., for this reason: they take one or two doses of the drug themselves, and base their opinion of its action on the result produced on their own systems, forgetting that the same medicine may have a totally different effect upon one accustomed to its use; a person not a smoker might just as well expect, by taking one pipe, to tell how a real smoker feels under the influence of tobacco,—the results, then, of a lesser dose on a real chloral-eater are partly of a stimulating, partly of a soothing nature. The stimulation, however, is not like that caused by opium or alcohol; it is not exhilarating, and does not incite to action either mentally or bodily. But the subject of the influence rises for a time above all his cares, or sorrows, or fatigue, and seems to look on life through the medium of a rose-tinted glass. But while care and sorrow are forgotten, and a strange dreamy sense

perfect ease, comfort, and happiness takes their place, all affection and love are likewise banished. He is apathetic, and cares for nothing save his own sense of comfort. He is, if I might so express it, merely a living breathing vegetable. In this state the confirmed chloral-eater would stand by the deathbed of his nearest and dearest a passive spectator, if not indeed actually smiling; and for the same reason he would stand quietly on the scaffold until executed. If the dose is repeated without the chloralist lying down, speech becomes indistinct, the eyelids drop, and the gait in walking is affected just as in drunkenness from alcohol. The chloralist, drunk in the first degree, is by no means an unpleasant companion. A stranger could mark nothing unusual about him; he is genial, and although rather languid and by no means bright in conversation, he is at all events a good listener, and is easily pleased, although his smiles often partake of the simpering or hysterical order; and, too, he is at times easily roused into an outbreak of furious passion, which dies away just as suddenly as it came, leaving no trace behind. But of course every one will not be affected precisely alike, as much depends on the idiosyncrasy or innate peculiarities of the chloralist.

In my own early stage of chloral-eating, I used to take a small pick-me-up dose when starting on a journey by rail. The effect was rather remarkable: all sense of bodily fatigue and even of unpleasant motion was banished; I seemed lifted out of myself—a spirit travelling by train—and the ever-varying scenery went gliding past me like an enchanted diorama. The difference in the effects of chloral and opium under the same circumstances would be this: opium is more imaginative, and paints things as they do not really exist—throws an artificial halo around them as it were; chloral merely increases the power of enjoying the real. The picture on the brain of the chloralist is, so to speak, photographic compared to that on the brain of the opium-eater, which might be called phantasmagorical. But few, I think, after having read these memoirs, will care to repeat my experiments in railway travelling.

‘I know from experience,’ said a gentleman to me the other day, ‘the work that chloral does. For many months, every night on my return from business, I found my poor wife drunk, and my dear children, who used to be so merry, silent and unhappy. But there was no smell of intoxicating liquor in the room, or even about her breath, and all my efforts to unravel the dreadful mystery were unavailing. But one evening after tea she dropped from her chair while trying to speak to me—dropped like a log on the floor, and I carried her to bed. Her face was red and swollen, her lips blue, her arms and legs were marble cold, even hard; she had no pulse at the wrist, but breathed as quietly as an infant. I sat by all that long night. Towards morning the sleep was moans and deep catching sighs; and when she at last

dreadful even to look upon her sufferings and agony. From doctor's lips I first heard the name of chloral. She is now a rous imbecile, and must, I fear, soon succumb to her infir-
ties.'

Yes, chloral is, as it were, a new Juggernaut set moving in society, and thousands annually fall beneath its wheels. God forbid I should seem to exaggerate the evil! But ask for yourself any wholesale chemist, and he will tell you that tons on tons of this dangerous drug are annually imported (from Germany and other parts) which are *not prescribed by medical men*, but taken as stimulants by the people themselves. Ask your medical man if he knows of a new disease called chloralism, or if he knows of any one that is addicted to chloral-eating, and see how gravely he will shake his head.

Hydrate of chloral in every shape—unless exhibited by the hands of a skilled practitioner—is an insidious and fatal poison. It is more tempting than alcohol, more insinuating than opium, and more terrible in its effects than either. I ought to know; for although never much of a spirit-drinker, five, six, and sometimes nine ounces of laudanum used to be my daily allowance ten years ago. I was very young then, and did not believe that opium could hurt. I well remember that chemist's back shop where another newly-edged medico and myself used to meet of a forenoon; first I would call for a quarter of a pint of laudanum—this was made into punch with hot water and sugar—and when finished my friend would return me the compliment, and we were very brilliant and very happy in consequence. But I had given up taking opium, and was well and strong and healthy long, long before I was tempted to become a chloralist. An opium-eater, baneful though the practice is, has been known to live to a goodly old age; no chloralist ever lasted over three years.

O, that lost year of '72, how freshly the memory of it and of my sufferings comes back to me as I write! But let me not anticipate.

A friend of mine—a bright and intelligent young man—and myself both commenced the practice of chloral-eating at the same time. I may tell his history in three words. *He is dead.* We became chloralists in December 1871. But little was then known of the after effects of chloral even by medical men. It was a new medicine, and worked wonders—they lauded it to the skies. We know better now. As I said, my friend and I commenced taking chloral in December 1871. He succumbed in the following July. Unfortunately, he did not find out till within a week or two of the end that it was the new drug which was doing him to death; and even I believe it would have been too late could he have, by any
But he did not and could not, and what

is still more sad, I fear he took 'one last biggish dose,' as he said he would, 'to anticipate the inevitable;' and you would not have been too ready to have blamed him had you known all, and seen the bodily torments, and worst of all the mental anguish, he endured. For despair is one of the most common symptoms of advanced chloralism.

He is buried where used to be his favourite seat, every day in the month of June, when he was able to crawl thither. It is the graveyard of a beautiful south-coast watering-place; the air on that breezy cliff-top was so pure and bracing; then there was the wide dreamy ocean to gaze upon, dotted with white sails from many a busy land; and the blue sky with its fleecy summer clouds; and there was a tree for shelter from the noon-day sun; and the grass so long and green and cool.

I had been for some months out-door assistant to a physician in Surrey. He was one of those men who work their assistants as they would a hired horse; take all out of him they can for the money. So I was kept at it very hard and close all day; only I had the night to myself. I sustained about this time a loss which caused me a good deal of grief, and this, combined with the irksomeness of my duties, began to tell upon me so far that I suffered from sleeplessness, so that at times I could get no rest till far into the morning hours; and being deprived of sufficient sleep, I was naturally in poor trim for the labours of the succeeding day. It would have been well for me if I had now at once thrown up my appointment, as I had to do a month or two later, and sought retirement. But one fine morning, in reading a medical journal, I came across the letter of a practitioner who was loud in his praises of hydrate of chloral. How well I remember the words: 'produces sleep almost instantaneously—the sleep is pleasant and dreamless—patient awakes in the morning fresh and clear-brained, with no headache and merely a little whitening of the tongue—no after effects.' 'Eureka!' I cried; 'this very night I shall be lapped in Elysium.'

I was lapped accordingly. I took twenty grains of chloral and slept like a stone till morning. Overjoyed with the success of my experiment, I repeated the dose next night, and every night for a week; after which I tried one night without, but found I was entirely unable to sleep, and so had recourse to my draught about three in the morning. Six weeks went past, and although as yet I had felt no ill effects from the chloral, still I had my misgivings, and resolved that I would give it up *some of these days*. One thing, however, which I observed was, that on awakening in the morning I felt as if actually no space of time had intervened since I lay down. My life seemed a continuous never-ending day; I had no tention from my sleep, and felt dispirited in consequence only taken warning now! But I did not; for t.

earliest symptom of that coming irritability, or chronic congestion of the brain, which the continuous use of chloral never fails to produce. About two months after I had begun taking chloral I became sensible of a strange heat on the top of my head, together with a sense of fulness in the head. My nerves, too, began to be shaken. I could do things slowly, but any hurry or excitement at once confused me. When compounding medicines against me, I was several times nearly making fatal mistakes. I well-nigh destroyed one old gentleman by giving him a dram of Dover's powder instead of compound jalap powder—the powders being similar in colour. A lady of rank had also a narrow escape. I had actually my hand on the bottle to give her ten grains of tartar emetic. She would not have required another dose. But when one day I made a mixture, containing six drops of liquor arsenicalis (liquor of arsenic) to the dose, which was prescribed for a mother, and labelled to be taken by her dear baby, things had just come to be about as bad as they could be. I did not notice my mistake until fully an hour after the boy had gone, and only by the merest chance.

'The child will be dead!' I cried, and rushed madly down the street, hoping against hope that I should still be in time to avert the dreadful calamity. By good luck our surgery boy was a youth of a very easy-going turn of mind; he never allowed his business to interfere with his pleasure, so I found him not far off playing marbles beside the basket in which was the bottle of medicine still intact. He first took possession of the bottle—I actually hugged it to my heart, and thanked God fervently for averting the double danger; then I punched the boy's head and kicked the little beggar down the street; and finally, as soon as I turned a corner, I cursed my own stupidity, and sent the bottle to smithereens against the wall. Then I went home and resigned my situation. It was time. I had now increased my dose to thirty grains of chloral nightly. I remember—and this will show to what a condition my brain and nervous system must have been reduced even then—I was packing my traps to go down into Kent; stooping down was torture to me, and do what I would I could not get things to go straight as I wished. I asked the poor cat, who was very fond of me, and was sorrowfully watching my preparations for departure. I felt vexed at myself immediately after, and began taking revenge on a blue-bottle that had been annoying me all the morning. The way this one dodged me round and round the room and eluded my frantic efforts to kill him makes me smile to think of now, but was a very serious matter to me then. After I had accomplished my fell design on his life, I tumbled down on the sofa and was unable

by I could not resist the temptation of pay-

ing a farewell visit to the innocent child I had so nearly sent to its grave. Little did that mother know what my thoughts were as I kissed and patted her pretty babe.

The quiet seclusion of a Kentish village and freedom from all annoyance revived and soothed me, and the bracing air seemed to kill the poison that was circulating in my veins, so that I was soon able to reduce my nightly dose by one-half, and was strong enough to take long walks; for although only February, the atmosphere was warm and sunny, the wheat long and green, and primroses growing in every glade. But a cold dismal spring succeeded; vegetation was nipped in the bud, and the feathery snow lay inches deep on the apple-blossom in the orchard, and I once more passively surrendered myself to King Chloral.

In justice to myself, I ought to say that I had no suspicion it was the hydrate of chloral that was doing me all the mischief. I was treating myself for brain congestion. I noticed now that I was losing flesh. Day after day I observed this in the glass; crow-feet began to appear about my eyes, and wrinkles where never wrinkles were before. My pulse, too, got more and more thready. Even at this early stage I had very little hope of ever getting well; and so day after day I marked in the glass my thin worn face and the gathering wrinkles, and waited and waited for death. Had I died now, or at any time during my illness, I should have died with my finger on my pulse, counting even the last beat. My sufferings were now increased by periodic attacks of *tic-douloureux* of a very distressing character, and my remedy was more chloral. A strange thing was, that I could never bear any allusion to my illness. Although I felt sure I was dying, I kept the secret secure in my own breast, and made every effort to seem well in the street by walking quicker than my strength would permit, and refusing even the aid of my cane. I had friends and relations who would gladly have come to see and to live with me; but I never even told them I was ailing; I preferred death among strangers.

It is the end of June; the weather is beautiful, but hot. I crawl down to the sea-side, my Newfoundland, the well-known champion Theodore-Nero, carrying my rugs, and lie for hours sheltered from the sun by a bush, while he is paddling in the waves. Poor noble dog! he wonders much what has come over his master, who used to be as fond of romps as he himself. The extreme irritability of the brain, which feels like one immense sore, is soothed and calmed by the fresh sea-breeze, and a drowsy feeling steals over me. This is the only time of the day I have the slightest freedom from pain and misery. Excepting this solitary walk, it is months since I have been able to go out or keep any company. I am constantly reading or thinking, trying, as the Germans say, to 'solve the infinite.' My constant prayers had been

that I might either get slowly well or speedily die. Hope deferred maketh sick the soul, and all faith in prayer has gone, and all belief in religion or revelation. I sometimes even doubt the existence of a Supreme Being Himself.

My bodily sufferings are very great, and my mind is a mere chaos. My face is *so* thin and white and worn, that I start at my own image in the glass. My eyes are constantly dilated, and the least excitement runs my pulse from sixty to a hundred. Towards evening my head feels as if frozen, and I sit in a benumbed stupor until bed-time. Undressing I feel is one of the labours of Hercules, and has to be done by degrees. I do not take my chloral—three drams, enough to kill as many men—until I am in bed, and the house perfectly still; for the slightest noise would necessitate a double dose. When all is quiet, I drink and—

Three months more have passed away. After poor G.'s death I made strenuous efforts to reduce my dose of chloral, and continued the same for more than a month. What nights of sleepless agony! what days of restless pain! I am now taking three drams and a half at bed-time, and one more at early morning. I have often started from my sleep at midnight with a strange dread of impending death which I cannot describe, and found my hands cold, and no pulse at the wrist. I can now barely walk one hundred yards without sitting or lying down. The irritability of the brain is changed into a feeling of indescribable agony if I attempt to get up an incline or a stair. Superadded to this is a horrible sensation of strangulation, which is nearly always present when I assume the upright position. My poor dog, how I pity him! Seldom will he leave my couch-side. He will stand and look at me for an hour at a time. I try to crawl out with him for a little way every day. It is but a little way, indeed, I can go; and the faithful fellow seems to know this; for as soon as I sit down he looks up in my face, wags his tail, and trots off to take a little turn for himself, always returning in less than ten minutes. He has entirely given up fighting with other large dogs, and I'm sure he knows I am suffering, and can see the change in my face. But he will not go out with any one else, nor take his food from any hand but my own. Poor dog, how he will miss me!

Other three months have gone; it is now the bleak December. The end must be very nigh. In the beginning of November I was prevailed upon to go to see a London physician—a specialist. His specialism was heart-disease. I did not tell him how much chloral I was taking. I don't know that I had very much hope of life when I went to see this man; but if I had any, I left it all at his house, and brought away with me—despair. He examined no part of my body but the region of the heart, and treated the head symptoms as only secondary. *Shall I ever forget how deftly his little white*

fingers glided over other parts of my chest, and settled, snake-like on the region of the heart!

'Here's where your trouble is,' he said; 'a little enlargement of the right side—nothing to signify.'

I heard his instructions and received his prescriptions, kindly tendered, like one in a dream. All doubt was now at an end; every ray of hope banished; I was literally condemned to death.

'I take an interest in your case,' he said, 'and will watch it.'

I thanked him for formality sake, although his words brought me about as much comfort as they would have done spoken by Calcraft to the wretch he would soon have to operate on officially. It was as though he had said, 'Go home and die, my boy; I'll have much pleasure in watching the symptoms, and duly recording them for the benefit of the profession.'

I dragged myself wearily back to the station, but I felt no longer the slightest interest in anything that was happening around me. I was in the world, but no longer of the world. Not until I had reached home and retired for the night did I begin to feel the whole horror of my situation. Now it was the awful uncertainty of the kind of death I should die that hurt me most; for I remember how I used to envy the Communists who were at that time being shot in Paris. I knew I should die lingeringly, and in the full possession of my senses, feeling the ebbing of my heart's pulse and counting my latest breath. As to any future state, I had no hopes at all. I had lost all belief in the existence of a beneficent Creator. I believed in the doctrine of chance, and looked upon the existence of soul as mere poetry and romance. I felt quite convinced that nothing could exist independent of matter; that height and depth, and up and down, the points of the compass, weight, sight and sound, thought itself, and every principle or so-called fundamental truth, had no existence in the abstract, or 'beyond an earth.' I believed in the after existence for the merely material part of my body, but that would be sublunary. Matter cannot die, I reasoned, and I shall live again—live again in the sunny air, in the dew that distils from the clouds—live again in trees, in grass, in flowers, and perhaps in some other form of animal life; and here, amidst all my gloomy speculations, came the ridiculous thought, 'I shouldn't like to be a centipede though, nor a beetle, nor anything creepy.' For what was life but change? what was change but motion, motion the result of force, force heat in another form? and what was heat? So I soared away, and got lost in the realms of the abstruse. But it will be thus seen that there was no aberration of intellect, no wandering or hallucination. The brain was clear, though in a state of high exaltation, and my reason was similar to, and sensations arrived at the same as those of many school-boys—notably those of Germany. God be praised, I:

eyes now ; and am thankful, on looking back to those days of gloom and suffering, to think that I never entirely gave up the habit of praying with which my mother first instilled me.

And now there began to dawn in my mind a feeling from which I at first recoiled with horror—I constantly saw looming in the distance the dread necessity of suicide, for the time I knew would soon come when I could bear no more.

As a farther source of comfort to me, my medical adviser had given me a little book of which he was author—a book on disease of the right side of the heart, and which described very minutely the different modes of exit from this world specially prepared for poor wretches so afflicted. This book was Bible to me for many days. The easiest style seemed to be to live all your life with continual congestive headache, and expire some fine morning in a fit. Then there was sudden death by *angina pectoris* (heart cramp) or by paralysis. O, it was a merry volume !

If I were not writing these confessions as a warning to others, I would draw a veil over my last awful experiences of chloral hydrate. For the first fortnight in December never less than five drachms of this medicine was my nightly dose. From the time I arose in the morning—for I still left bed daily, having a horror of it—my sufferings were extreme. I had now lost all power of reading, writing, or speaking aloud ; any attempt to do either was excruciating brain agony, and if persevered in, fainting followed. I could hardly move my head from the pillow or sit erect, while my eyes seemed starting from their sockets if I attempted to walk. But towards night—well, if all of mental, all of bodily, suffering I ever endured in life could be compressed into one hour, it would not exceed the torments I then underwent. Every vein in my body seemed swollen to double the size and inflamed along the whole length, while the restlessness was so distressing that I could not lie for five minutes in any one position. Add to this that time seemed indefinitely long—minutes as hours and hours as days—and you will have some faint notion of my experience of the ‘grand new remedy for sleeplessness that had no after effects.’

My poor dog had formed a little plan of his own, and every morning and evening took little walks all by himself. He never stopped beyond half an hour, and many a pressing invitation I know he refused from other dogs to have a romp. It was as if he had answered them thus, ‘Nay, nay, my master is very ill, and I have no heart to play ; for I may not have him long.’ He always came in with a jump and a run, and all a-gasp as if he had hurried home, and exhibited as much joy at seeing me as if we had not met for a month. At all other times he was sad.

Then came a day when my landlady took fright, and went of her medical man to come and see me. I was worse

that day than ever I had been. This gentleman hardly stopped a minute with me, and as he went out I heard him say to the landlady :

'You ought to have sent for me before—weeks ago ; he can't last many hours now.'

So, then, it had come at last ; I was almost face to face with the grim enemy. I think my first action was to throw my arms around that great dog's neck and burst into a fit of crying. It may seem silly to non-lovers of dogs, but that poor faithful creature that was now licking away my tears was the only tie that bound me to life.

Then I went quietly to bed and took a dose of chloral, previously making up my mind that when I should awake in the stillness of the night I should swallow something else which I had kept beneath my pillow on purpose for weeks. I had something for my canine friend too. He should die first, for I could not bear the thought of leaving him to rough it and be ill-used among strangers. Towards morning I awoke suddenly. The dog was sitting by the bedside, and his great head was pillowed on my chest. I could no more give that poor dog poison than I could get up and walk. I took more chloral instead. The doctor was to come at ten in the morning, and I was anxiously awaiting his arrival. He came at last. The first thing he did was to glance up at the windows to see if the blinds were down, and I think he was disappointed that they weren't. I did not like this man, and lay perfectly still with closed eyes when he came in. He felt my pulse gently enough, and then stood looking at me for a few moments with his hands in his pockets.

'Wondering what you'll put on my death-certificate, eh, doctor?' said I, opening my eyes.

'I am,' he replied bluntly.

'Then,' said I, 'here's the verdict—*jelo de se*. Now good-bye ; I can't bear talking.'

He went away accordingly, thinking, no doubt, I was slightly *distrain*.

Hardly had the sound of this man's carriage-wheels died away in the distance when a hale, hearty, bluff old gentleman stepped into my room. He was a medical man I had often heard of ; he had good deal of the old Abernethy bluntness about him, but hid a kind heart behind a rough exterior. He soon elicited from me the whole history of the chloral. Then he stood at my bedside, himself looking as jolly as a sandboy, and offered to bet me five to one that if I followed his instructions to the letter I would be a different man and in good health in five months. He examined my heart ; said I was weakened by the poison imbibed, but nothing more. Though his words seemed to me only a cruel mockery, I promised faithfully to obey him in every particular. Then he destroyed all my chloral and asked me if I had any hidden store.

'No,' I said, 'I hadn't, but—' I hesitated—his hand was under the pillow at once.

'What is this?' he said, opening a little phial. 'Arsenic?'

'Anticipation, doctor,' I answered.

'Then here goes for anticipation;' and he emptied the bottle in the fire.

I had no chloral that night, and such a night I never passed before, and I trust I never shall again. Sleep, of course, was impossible; but I tossed about all the long, long hours in a bath of perspiration, yawning, stretching, and sneezing. The most painful feeling was a sensation of rending at my heart, as if some monstrous crab were gnawing out my vitals. I never slept a wink for over a week, and then sleep only came in fitful snatches. I was of course too much prostrated to leave bed. On the second night I was delirious, and so on for the several nights following.

My delirium, too, took at first a strange form. Some presence seemed to be ever with me asking me question after question in rapid succession, which I was impelled to answer in rhyme. Words nor metre never once failed me, and in one night I am certain I composed sufficient verses to set a dozen poets up in life; in fact, I had been suddenly transformed into a living, breathing, rhyming dictionary; but the distress this form of delirium caused me can hardly be imagined. On the third night there was an entire change in the performance; the rhyming fever left me, my eye no more rolled in fine frenzy, and the delirium was changed to a dioramic entertainment. To wit: in my travels and voyages round the world I had gazed on many a beautiful coast scene from my cabin; these scenes were framed as it were by the round port-hole; and very pretty pictures they often made, each one varied as the weather or climate varied, but always having the sea in the foreground, whether calm and serene or ruffled and angry, the sky above, whether blue with flecks of snowy cloudlets or dark and lowering with the coming storm, and the landscape in the middle. Now back from the realms of memory came those circular pictures one by one, and by the hundred gliding before my half-closed eyes like dioramic scenes of enchantment.

Next night again a farther change of programme; and this continued for many nights, till gentle sleep began to resume her reign. Instead of merely seeing the pictures, I was in them; they were real. I was part and parcel of all the light and loveliness around me; gentle breezes fanned my heated brow and soft music murmured in my ears. Anon the scene would change: I was tossing all alone in a little boat during a thunder-storm in the stormy sea that surrounds the Cape, or a cyclone was furiously blowing around me in the Indian Ocean, pitchy dark but for the gleam of the lightning and the white of the breaking waves, the roar of which was deafen-

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ing. Again I was perched aloft on an iron-bound coast, among beetling crags towering black above me, the sea breaking at my feet and the cormorants screaming and whirling around me ; or wandering on the ice in Greenland, still alone ; nothing to be seen but interminable plains of dazzling white, nothing above me save the blue cloudless sky and the cold sun, whose beams seemed to freeze instead of giving heat. Then again the scene would change, and once more I was wandering on the rose-clad hills of Persia, or watching with drowsy interest the bees at work among the purple heather of the native mountains.

My recovery was a long and tedious one ; but hope had revived in my heart, and in three months I could walk as many miles. Sleep too returned to bless me, and I felt indeed a new man. Blessings on the rough kindness of that good and clever doctor ! I had no longer any head or heart symptoms, no longer any dread of stairs or inclines. I consulted many eminent medical men about my heart, and these eminent medical men laughed at me. Then I went to insure my life, and the proposal was not refused. Now the specialist told me I was to take exercise only on level ground, and if I would avoid sudden death, not to attempt hill or height. I determined to put this to the test, in order to know the very worst. I tried a moderate steep hill first, and did not die. Next I went up into a steeple, and lived to look down upon the people. The tower of the Crystal Palace was my next venture ; then St. Paul's and in neither place did I drop stone-dead. Since then I have been to Scotland, and stood on the tops of the highest mountains and made faces at the eagles, and my faithful friend has stood by my side and barked at them, for the dear dog has got young again as well as his master. God forbid that I should seem to boast of this. I have no other feeling but that of gratitude for having been snatched from the very brink of a suicide's grave.

Few could come through the same ordeal that I have done and live to tell it ; and even now, though well and strong, there is a shadow on my life and a chastened sorrow at my heart which will never leave it. I feel as if I had come from behind the dark curtain and somehow know that greatest of all mysteries, the *mystery of death*.

GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

MARRIAGE À LA MODE IN THE LAND OF FREEDOM

A Chapter concerning Connubial Concordances

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, in advising that a person of genius should marry a person of character, observes that the former will have an infinitely deeper reverence for the latter than character can have for genius. 'To be sure,' says he, 'genius gets the world's praise, because its work is a tangible product, to be bought, or had for nothing. It bribes the common voice to praise it by presents of speeches, poems, statues, pictures, or whatever it can please with. Character evolves its best products for home consumption; but, mind you, it takes a good deal more to feed a family for thirty years than to make a holiday feast for our neighbours once or twice in our lives. You talk of the fire of genius. Many a blessed woman, who dies unsung and unremembered, has given out more of the real vital heat that keeps the life in human souls, without a spark flitting through her humble chimney to tell the world about it, than would set a dozen theories or a hundred odes simmering in the brains of so many men of genius. It is in *latent caloric*, if I may borrow a philosophical expression, that many of the noblest hearts give out the life that warms them. Cornelia's lips grow white, and her pulse hardly warms her thin fingers, but she has melted all the ice out of the hearts of those young Gracchi, and her lost heat is in the blood of her youthful heroes. We are always valuing the soul's temperature by the thermometer of public deed or word; yet the great sun himself, when he pours his noonday beams upon some vast hyaline boulder, rent from the eternal ice quarries and floating towards the tropics, never warms it a fraction above the thirty-two degrees of Fahrenheit that marked the moment when the first drop trickled down its side. How we all like the spirting up of a fountain, seemingly against the law that makes water everywhere slide, roll, leap, tumble headlong, to get as low as the earth will let it! That is genius. But what is this transient upward movement, which gives us the glitter and the rainbow, to that unsleeping, all-present force of gravity, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever (if the universe be eternal), the great outspread hand of God Himself, forcing all things down into their places, and keeping them there? Such, in smaller proportion, is the force of character to the fitful movements of genius, as they are. They have been, linked to each other in many a household, where the one is as historic, and the other—let me

say the nobler—unknown, save by some faint reflected ray borrowed from its lustrous companion.'

Proverbs are so opposed to the sense of each other, that one of a diametrically opposite reasoning may be immediately contrasted with any other that might be suggested. We are told, for instance, in an old axiom that 'marriage is a lottery,' while another lays down a heavenly origin for all connubial connections. Which of the two is to be believed? But, whether the one or the other, it may be reasonably wondered how many such happy unions of dissonant yet kindred souls, as Oliver Wendell Holmes has sketched above, of the strength of will allied to the spirit of peace, are probably existent in England; and, if 'few and far between' here, how rare are they not in America, the land of freedom *from* everything, even to the sanctity of the marriage tie and the trammels of home influence and home love?

The fact is, that all is genius there—a reckless, bounding enterprising, aspiring genius, unsatisfied and unsatisfying, and to which character is of no account. The placid charms of a quiet nature are unsuited to the eager craving impetuosity of the Transatlantic masculine mind. Genius must meet with genius there, or else there would be a dead-lock in the whole concern; and so the two fountains of mad waters leap and mingle together, and rise and fall and sink with a splash, or are torn piecemeal apart and scattered to the wings of the wind by the contrary currents of air into which they have danced so exultingly. The poor character-puppets too, forced to coalesce, in default of the wished-for opposite element which would have completed their lives and made both entireties, are likewise lost in the slough of commonplace, and never shine out with the bright light they would have otherwise displayed if fittingly matched. And thus genius and character, as evinced in New-England matrimonials, are dead to each other and to the community at large; hence it is that American marriages are the most ill assorted and unhappy of all nationalities, and that we hear so many rumours of woman's rights and woman's mission, woman's wrongs and woman's advancement, coming across the broad Atlantic every day, and necessarily reacting on our institutions at home.

If one may judge from the shocking disclosures which fill the columns of United-States newspapers, the marriage law rests there on a very lax and unstable foundation, at least in the western portion of the country. Things have arrived at such a pitch in Illinois, *par exemple*, that the other day a journal of Chicago boasted of its containing a divorce column similar to its notices of births, deaths, and marriages. Lovelaces and Lotharios have it all their own way on the other side of the Mississippi, and the contagion is gradually spreading to the Eastern States. The origin of this disruptionary innovation is laid at the door of extravagance; but, alth-

may be many exceptional instances of prodigal waste and wantonness in the pursuit of folly and fashion, those who know the States well will hardly believe that towns are changed in a few months from working hives of industry into so many Capuas, as destructive to the morality and prosperity of the New World as the old City of the Plains was to ancient Rome. New York is a wicked-enough city, in all conscience; but during the whole time I lived there—some three years—I do not remember three sensational *esclandres* having occurred. If they had happened, they would have been certainly noticed in the press, which is decidedly not ill informed of what goes on in the city, and publishes full particulars of everything in the shape of news, no matter how nauseous may be the details. The Beecher-Tilton scandal has been quite a recent event, and the commotion that has arisen from the disclosures in the case is sufficient to prove my rule.

Fanny Fern, the late popular American essayist—who, to do her justice, invariably supported her sex—not long since animadverted strongly on the growing extravagance of feminine toilettes, which had proceeded to such lengths that actually little children were being contaminated by the spreading spirit of prodigality and morbid desire for meretricious show and sham. No doubt she was quite right; but all this display arises from the effects of the 'shoddy aristocracy' to make themselves known. I do not believe the better class of American women participate in this worship of Vanity Fair. The cause for the unhappiness of Transatlantic marriages must be sought elsewhere.

To those acquainted with the habits and mode of life of the citizens of the United States, this can be deliberately traced to two sources—the frenzied desire for the acquisition of wealth now current amongst the representatives of Young America to the sinking of every other consideration, and the normal system of boarding-house life.

With regard to the former point, the people of the States are rabid. Everything is sacrificed on the shrine of the immortal dollar, and all classes live up to and for their income alone. All the claptrap show and extravagance in which they indulge is simply for effect, and not enjoyment. A young man's whole thoughts there on entering into life is to secure a fortune; and when he has got it, to show his compeers how much richer, and consequently 'bigger' a man he is than they. He must have a fine house in the best quarter, a good trotting-wagon, a fine team of horses—all to be looked at, for they are quite out of his line of enjoyment and what he had been bred up to. He must get him a wife—not to love her or care for her, but to be admired as *his* wife; and, as

'Maidens, like moths, are ever caught by glare,

And Mammon wins his way where seraphs might despair,'

he succeeds, the two together running a fine race of havoc, to the 'Rake's Progress' would be but an outline sketch. The

result generally is a grand smash; whereupon the 'wife' obtains a divorce, or else hies off with some one else, and relapses into the usual fate of a divorcée. Such is the ordinary case with those fortunate few who, making large sums of money suddenly and unexpectedly through speculation in Wall-street or by luck in oil-wells, spend it as rapidly, on the usual principle of 'lightly come, lightly go;' but this would not account for the general state of marriage amongst the community at large. All citizens in the States are not sprung from shoddy, by a long way; so the rule would fail in its application. The more probable reason I would ascribe to the second source of the evil, to which I have already referred—the boarding-house system of living, which is adopted by almost two-thirds of the people who live in large towns.

Out of a million and a half, or thereabouts, of the population that inhabits the city and suburbs of New York and Brooklyn, certainly half a million, if not more, reside in boarding-houses. The custom may consequently be termed a national one, and in spite of the advantages it possesses over housekeeping, through the high rent of separate dwellings, it has so many drawbacks that one wonders at its almost universal adoption. In the first place, in one of these establishments privacy, about the greatest of home charms, is entirely discarded; and in the second, it is decidedly expensive and wasteful in the long-run, teaching people to live from hand to mouth, from day to day, with nothing to look forward to at the year's end, and no inducements to save anything out of their income. The lives of a considerable number of New-York clerks and other employes may thus be sketched. A young man, we will say, marries on his salary of some twenty dollars a week—they frequently marry very young here—and the young couple, as a natural consequence, for their means will allow of nothing else, go to live at a boarding-house somewhere convenient in Brooklyn or Jersey City, both easily reached by ferry-boat from the business quarter of the city. Here they probably have only one room for a sleeping apartment in return for the price per week they are able to pay for their accommodation, and take their meals in a common room with the other boarders, the arrangements of which are something like, only far inferior to, a continental *table-d'hôte*.

In the morning the pair go down to breakfast together at six o'clock, after which the husband starts off in the hottest haste for his occupation in the city—work commencing in America for all trades and professions at a very early period of the day, much earlier than in London, where no one hardly is stirring before eight o'clock. On the husband's departure, the young wife has to return to their room, as the common room is wanted by the landlady to prepare for the next meal, and the 'drawing-room,' the only other public one, is kept for visitors to be shown into; and if she sees her friends

there, instead of asking them up to her own private room, she will probably be disagreeably interrupted by some visitors to the other boarders. I have known a very comfortable flirtation between a young lady from the country and her 'beau' brought to an abrupt conclusion by some one unexpectedly popping into the parlour without knocking.

Should the young wife not go out shopping—for she has no housekeeping cares to occupy her mind, and nothing to do save read or 'gad about'—she may go down again to the common room to lunch at twelve o'clock, when she will be treated to the relics of breakfast warmed up for the occasion. After this she must return again to her room, or go out, until dinner or 'supper' time at six, when her husband comes home from his work, and her solitude is broken.

Our married couple probably meet again, for the first time since parting in the morning, at the public dinner-table, in the company of the other boarders. There is no pleasant sight for the young husband of his little wife running to meet him joyfully at his return.

' Her sweet face at the window,
Her dear form at the door,
That watches for his coming,
To greet him home once more,'

as the Christy Minstrels used to sing (with a trifling alteration), is a myth to him; for he only sees her surrounded by strangers and amidst the aroma of baked meats, savoury but done to death. At the table there is no genial conversation, the boarders, like Americans in general, making a thorough business of the meal. They come there to eat, and they do so accordingly. Everybody retires when he or she pleases, as they have assembled, without uttering a greeting or a 'good-bye' to any of their fellows, their acquaintanceship being only on the footing of travellers, to be taken up or dropped at pleasure when it suits their convenience or interests.

Dinner ended, our couple retire to their room, for there is nowhere else to go, save to the theatre, a lasting resource, but which palls on the taste; and the effect of this sort of life becomes plainly visible after a time. The husband returns to the habits of his bachelorhood, frequenting billiard-saloons and bar-rooms; while the wife soon picks up with a male friend to console her for the loss of her legitimate mate's society, as the boarding-house offers no sociability or home charms to preserve the domestic feelings; and thus the seeds are sown of after misery and misfortune, which time brings to maturity.

Life in the country is a shade better, perhaps; but there the wife soon sinks to the capacity of a household drudge. Mrs. Stowe's novel called *Oldtown Folks* gives a very good picture of American provincial life, its various hardships, struggles, and experiences. I

don't know how it is, but our Transatlantic cousins seem to make too much of a toil of life ever to enjoy it. Living with them means working and the acquirement of dollars; happiness is a dream which they hardly believe in, except they've religion enough to look forwards to seeing 'the gates ajar.'

Seeing what liberty girls in America have, and the opportunities they possess of judging for themselves as to the character of their future husbands before marriage, it is a matter of surprise that happy unions are not the rule and miserable ones the exception; but the contrary is usually the case, and I believe it more the fault of the men than the women of the country. There is a sort of metallic hardness about the Western men and those from the Eastern States which apparently prevents them from appreciating the softer influences of love and home; loose passions they are doubtless gifted with, like us all, but of the purer influences of domestic affection they seem totally ignorant. I allude, of course, here principally to what we would term the 'middle' and 'lower-middle' classes amongst ourselves.

Miss Adah Isaacs Menken is not a character to admire or take for a national type of American womanhood; but in her poems *Infelicia*, published after her death, she draws a sad picture of the dead weight that women across the Atlantic have to contend against. It is this hardness of the masculine nature and grasping dollar-love that causes all the scandals of which we hear—sensational divorces, procurable in Indiana at two dollars a head; Albany elopements; Saratoga symposiums. But it may be within the power of American women to retrieve all this, and do away with the great scandal which at present rests upon their sex and country. They may be too exacting, and, expecting to find too much, discover after the irrevocable (save in America) knot has been tied that their grand 'swans' are nothing but bare geese after all. Still, let them remember what their own native writer has declared, for he means what he says, and writes pertinently: 'It is not at all essential that all pairs of human beings should be, as we sometimes say of particular couples, "born for each other." Sometimes a man or a woman is made a great deal better and happier in the end for having had to conquer the faults of the one beloved, and make the fitness not found at first by gradual assimilation. There is a class of good women who have no right to marry perfectly good men, because they have the power of saving those who would go to ruin but for the guiding providence of a good wife. I have known many such cases. It is the most momentous question a woman is ever called upon to decide, whether the faults of the man she loves are beyond remedy, and will drag her down, or whether she is competent to be his earthly redeemer and lift him up to her own level.'

JOHN C. HUTCHESON.



G. Kirby, del.

"STOLE NEAR, KISS'D, WOKE HIM."

A DRAMA

Argument.—Two market-girls, sisters, on their return home from Paris during the Reign of Terror, find a condemned and escaped noble poet asleep on a bench in a wood. One sister, the fairer, kisses him; and her he marries. The other, through jealousy, affects love for him, and gives her married sister proof of his infidelity. Then they two denounce him to the court of justice, where there is no defence; and he dies on the guillotine.

ACT I.

WHEN all the land of France was red with blood
Of all her best, he scaped, and in a wood,

Where many trees
Made windy music, and wild wandering bees
Sang, on a stone seat set for rustic ease

Resting, thought, 'Here,
Far from Death's city, is no cause for fear;'
And read, for ever books to him were dear,

And no count kept
Of hours, till evening shadows slowly crept
On the page his finger parted, and he slept.

There, all alone,
Our poet dream'd of Fame's rare bud full blown,
Of rich ripe fruit from seed in first spring sown;

Till chance that way
Two hucksters came from the city, for on that day
Their village made its market—well men say

That all is fate.
Two sisters, full of envy, wrath, and hate—
Found at the last, but found, alas, too late—

One the more fair,
Stole near, kiss'd, woke him; sudden into air
Drifted Fame's dream before a dream more rare,

In her eyes seen!
He loved and married her: Love came between
His soul and Fame; and all he might have been,

All glory's strife,
All wealth of praise, he truck'd—all for a wife!
Such power had one poor woman to waste his life.

Meanwhile, aside
Her sister brooded, fair, but not as the bride
Fair, in strong jealousy and wounded pride,

With anger stirr'd,
 To see her prettier sister so preferr'd,
 To hear her proliz praise, but whilst she heard,
 Fast to and fro
 Fierce thought leapt in her, like the leaping glow
 From moving glass or water, 'He shall know.'
 At last she thought,
 'I will not be neglected, I, for naught;
 Nay, but his dear toy shall be dearly bought.'
 Then pale as lead
 She grew, and all for love for him, she said,
 In low sweet voice, and bitter tears she shed,
 His love to abuse;
 So sued for his love; and how shall man refuse
 His love, when for his love so woman sues?

ACT II.

O weak as tender tops of waving corn!
 O prize far sweeter than sweet summer morn,
 O bitter prize!
 O heart as hell black, and as heaven blue eyes!
 Red lips rue-savour'd, seats of love and lies,
 Love of an hour,
 Honey in hope, but in fruition sour!
 Garden of many a gaudy scentless flower,
 Where no fruits grow;
 Like some God's acre, in which wild roses blow,
 Where all is rottenness and worms below!
 To think that she,
 Who sued for his love, for hate the first should be
 To let his wife her wicked triumph see!
 One happy morn,
 When all the land laugh'd with ripe waving corn,
 His wife behind a hedge of flower and thorn
 Listen'd, and heard,
 From midst green leaves by birds and breezes stirr'd
 Only, full many a vow and velvet word:
 'Sweetheart, by whom
 My heart no more is mine, this world a tomb,
 Be thou my sun, and lighten my life's gloom!'
 Then saw, while drouth
 Parch'd her pale lips like some hot wind of the south,
 His mouth long linger on her sister's mouth,
 Who, in no wise
 With breath responsive, or return of sighs,
 Sat cold, white, silent, with averted eyes.

Thus pass'd away
Behind hate's cloud his wife's brief golden day ;
In what long winter ended her love's May !

And could she dare
To bring his fell foes from the fierce town there,
To the hamlet where he lived without all care,

In trust ? Heaven knows
Hands trusted are more hard than hands of foes ;
The nettle's sting hurts less than the prick of the rose,

With which Love plays,
And finds Love's small worm jealousy, which preys
In the midst, and will prey till this world decays.

But full of scorn
And love he, when dusk clouds with the next morn
Fought faintly, to that cursed court was borne ;

Where in the cause
Of liberty mad license broke all laws,
And murder fed with foul broad famished jaws :

Then the bright keen
And cold steel cut where warm white arms had been—
Death's sorry sequel of Love's woodland scene !

JAMES MEW.

DR. FIGARO'S ESTABLISHMENT FOR YOUNG GENTLEMEN

A Retrospect

BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

If there be any need for you to strengthen your conviction as to the plenitude of education in these times, and your pleasant persuasion as to how remarkably well taught your children must infallibly be, go you to the supplement of the *Times* newspaper, and read conscientiously the two or three columns (the other day there were five) of advertisements proclaiming, with a degree of modesty only surpassed by their veracity, the merits of our establishments for young ladies and gentlemen. It would be invidious, and besides it would be to impinge on the attributes of the advertising department of *Belgravia*, to particularise these establishments by name. Besides were I to do so, I should be only mentioning many of our old family friends. Long since we have mentally, if not physically, become acquainted with the earnest philanthropist who is anxious to give everybody's son 'one year's good schooling' before he enters upon the serious business of life; with the married country rector who has vacancies for two young gentlemen only (as the rector advertises nearly every day, there must be a prodigious number of young gentlemen who are continually leaving his school in order to make room for others); with the gentleman whose academy combines the advantages of a residence on the Continent with a sound classical and English commercial education; with the friend of boys who combines the public-school system with the comforts of home and individual attention; with the lofty and somewhat fastidious instructor who receives only the sons of gentlemen and provides them with swimming-baths, instruction in four languages, a covered playground and twenty acres of surrounding land on a gravelly soil; with the active and enterprising tutor who prepares pupils for Woolwich, Cooper's Hill, Army Direct, Control, and Civil Service; and especially with the awful being who so obligingly offers to reclaim manageable and backward boys, even should their unruliness continue to afflict their parents and guardians, until they (the boys) become virtually men. It must be hard work, very hard work, reclaiming and rendering perfectly docile and tractable an unmanageable boy six feet high, and with a very pronounced development of his deltoid muscles. How is it done? With a red-hot poker, chain cable, or a cartwhip, or what? Or does the reclaimer try

Rarey system, or the soothing system, or the mollifying-through-intellectual system?—the last including a course of study of the essays of Mr. Matthew Arnold, inculcating the advantages of sweetness and light, the wickedness of Philistinism—I had nearly written it Pharisaism—the danger of reading the *Daily Telegraph* (which may be warranted to render the sweetest and lightest youth hopelessly unmanageable and backward in less than a fortnight), and the expediency of cultivating Christian charity and forbearance towards writers with whose opinions we do not happen to agree, whose attainments we do not possess, whose style and diction are not those of conceited and pragmatistical dullards, and of whom, besides, we are meanly jealous. I think it must be the sweetening and lightening process which is tried upon the Little Pickles—what say I? with the Tom Joneses and the Tony Lumpkins of adolescence.

Ah, we are a wonderfully well-taught generation—those dreadful Philistines excepted! Here is an enterprising scholastic agent who offers me a choice of ten thousand schools at home and abroad. Ten thousand schools! I did not know that there were so many leaves on all the branches of the tree of knowledge. As for the girls, Danaus of Argos might at once find a separate school for every one of his fifty daughters by merely running his eye down a single column in the *Times*. What with the finishing schools, the high schools (where no day pupils are received), the first-class establishment which the lady, all of whose nieces were educated there, is so anxious every other day, through pure love of her species, to recommend, the name of the ladies' schools may fairly be put down as legion; and yet there is a troublesome person, a Mrs. Grey, I believe, who is continually writing letters and making speeches (and very excellent speeches too) about the higher education of women, and who seems to be very strongly of opinion that a great deal more than we at present possess is needed to devise a method for imparting something of the nature of a rational and useful education to King Danaus' fifty daughters.

So far as I am concerned, I simply stand aloof in amazed admiration of the increased educational facilities enjoyed by the youth of the upper and middle classes in this our bright, benevolent, and believing age. Confining my observation to my own sex, there is, for example, my young friend Guildenspur of the Performance of Official Functions Office, Somerset House. At the first blush you might arrive at the very erroneous conclusion that G. does not know great A from a bull's foot. He has always appeared to me a remarkably ignorant and silly young man. When he is not engaged at the office for the Performance of Official Functions, he is usually sucking at a short pipe or paying homage at the shrine of Miss Frisette, the barmaid at the Royal Abrakampa refreshment buffet; and I have heard that Guildenspur's evenings are usually devoted either to 'V

Imperial Ekaterinoslav Music-hall or to billiards. Yet the amount of knowledge possessed by this young gentleman when he went up for his pass examination before the Civil-Service Commissioners was something positively astounding, both as regards its variety and its profundity. He took the largest number of marks ever gained by a single candidate for his brilliant answers in cerebral physiology, crystallography, spectrum analysis, and prehistoric history. He was examined in Urdu, Græco-Sclavonic, Indo-Germanic, and Scented Pekoe. He was examined in Colenso's Arithmetic (the edition translated into intelligent Zulu), in conic sections, and in Cocker's Commentaries on the undiscovered Problems of Euclid (to which is appended the celebrated essay by Professor Gnomon, M.A., showing that Euclid was only a comic poet, and that the *Elements* were written by Hermes Trismegistus). He was examined in English literature, including Milton's *Arcopagitica*, Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Barrow on the *Pope's Supremacy*, Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* (that fine exemplar of political morality), and, above all, in the prologue to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. The ease with which Guildenspur, without even using Thomas Tyrwhitt's Glosses, filled up his Chaucerian paper, and construed the allusions to 'chevawtrie' and 'chevisance,' 'felawship,' the monk who was 'a sayre for the maistric,' and the monk who was 'rekkeles,' the pilot's 'herbewe' and 'lodemanage,' the doctor of physic who could well fortune the ascendent of his images for his patient, and the shipman who could draw full many a draught of wine 'from Burdeaux-ward while the chapman slepe,'* to say nothing of innumerable other verbal niceties and recondite advertences which to this day continue to puzzle students of mature age, ripe scholarship, and carefully disciplined habits of analysing the diction of a writer as difficult to read in English as Pindar in Greek, was only equalled by the delight with which, out of cramming hours, he had read the libidinous tales couched in filthy language of an author, splendid in his genius, and whose faults were only the faults of his age, but whose works are no more fit to be put into the hands of young people of either sex than Casanova's *Memoirs* or the *Decameron* of Boccaccio.† Such (I have said nothing about his attainments in hydraulics, pneumatics, palæ-

* Has any commentator on Chaucer—even to the most learned—been able to tell us whether the 'Burdeaux-ward,' from which the ship-captain obtained surreptitious draughts of claret, was situated at the port of Bordeaux in France, or was a warehouse or *entrepôt* in the port of London, used for the storage of wine imported from the Garonne? But Guildenspur of the Official Functions Office knows all about this, and five hundred more obscure allusions in 'Dan Chaucer,' of course.

† I don't think there could be quoted a stronger example of the slovenliness and 'sloppiness' of modern teaching than in the careless complacency of assumption which leads us in laughing at people whose knowledge of French is imperfect, to say that they speak it 'after the scole of Stratford-atte-Bowe.' What do we know of the quality of the French taught in the fourteenth century at Stratford? 'It

ontology, cryptography, Druidical theology, dental surgery, and psychic force) were a few of the subjects which young Mr. Guilden-
 spar 'took up,' and in which he 'passed' triumphantly. It is true
 that G. has a very large head, but from his normal vacuity of coun-
 tenance and usually idiotic conversation I used (ere I knew the
 secrets of his examination prison-house) to ascribe his preternatural
 frontal development to water on the brain. It is clear, however,
 that he was not hydrocephalous, but only a genius; and when he is
 gathered to his fathers, it may be discovered that his skull was one
 homogeneous helmet or case, like Pascal's, with no sutures, and with
 a single sagittal opening. This wonderfully-educated young man
 was in process of time duly selected to fill the important post he
 now holds in the Performance of Official Functions Office. They
 say that his duties mainly consist in counting turnpike tickets, wash-
 ing the obliterating marks off postage-stamps, and translating defunct
 telegrams into Greek hexameters; but that is neither here nor there.
 He went in at a salary of ninety pounds a year, and has an annual
 rise of three and sixpence-halfpenny. On his attaining his ninetieth
 birthday, and on showing to the satisfaction of the department that
 he has been septennially vaccinated, that he has never accepted an
 accommodation bill, that he has never written for the comic papers,
 asked for promotion, or made up his betting-book during office
 hours, that he is a member of the Church of England, and that his
 mental faculties—if he ever had any—have entirely deserted him,
 he will be entitled to retire on a pension calculated on the basis of
 seventy-two eight-hundredths of his salary at the age of seventy.
 For this, look you, is an age of competition, and we must be highly

was proper,' says the learned Tyrwhitt, 'that the Prioress should speak some sort
 of French, not only as a woman of fashion, a character which she is represented to
 affect, but as a religious person.' Because Stratford is in a direct line with Bow,
 Mile-end, Whitechapel, and Aldgate Pump, the learned Tyrwhitt jumped at once at
 the conclusion that there must have been some kind of mediæval Ladies' Seminary
 at Stratford, where the girls were taught Cockney French, and pronounced Boulogne
 as 'Bolong,' *Monsieur* as 'Mounseer,' and *Voulez-vous* as 'woolly woo.' There is, on
 the other hand, ample reason for supposing that towards the close of the fourteenth
 century there flourished a girls' school of the highest class at the maligned Stratford-
 -le-Bowe, then a petty and sequestered country village, and that this school was
 conducted by the nuns of an alien priory, the offshoot of some great abbey in France.
 The Prioress-nonne, who had probably been educated at this school, was apparently
 to judge from her appellation) more French than English in her engendrure, for
 she was 'clept Madame Euglentyne,' and when she swore her 'greatest oath nas
 by St. Eloy,' who was a French saint. Moreover, Chaucer admits that her
 French, albeit Stratfordian, was spoken 'full fayre and fetisly'—that is to say, neatly
 and cleverly; and although he adds that French of Paris was to her unknown, it
 must be remembered that, in Chaucer's time, the purest French was spoken not at
 Paris, but at Tours, at Orleans, and notably at Blois. It might well have been one
 of those 'Abbayes de Touraine,' concerning which Balzac has discoursed so fasti-
 dously, that served as a mother-house to the Anglo-French convent school of Strat-
 -le-Bowe.

educated or starve. For instance, there was that worthy soul Clunch, who was until lately head of Guildenspur's 'room.' Clunch was two-and-twenty years in the Performance of Official Functions Office. He was imprudent enough to marry early, and to be fond of his wife, and he has eight children who are perpetually demanding roast meat and new boots. Thus Clunch found, notwithstanding his annual 'rise,' and the high esteem in which he was held by his official chiefs, that his salary was growing every year smaller—in relation, that is to say, to the number of things his income would enable him to purchase. What did Clunch do? He resigned his post without any pension, superannuation, or compensation of any kind; he went down into the City and looked about him; and he is at present doing very well as buyer to a Berlin-wool house in Wood-street, Cheapside, and at a salary of a thousand a year.

I remember once sitting next at a civic dinner to an awful functionary in robes and a full-bottomed wig, whom I am reluctant to describe in greater detail since, although he took wine with me with the greatest affability on the occasion to which I refer, he may find, some day, the painful duty devolving on him of delivering me over to the tormentors, and also, remembering my impertinent mention of him in *Belgravia*, to add hard labour to the sentence of imprisonment, which not the most prosperous or the most cunning of us know but that we may some of these days incur. 'There goes my unfortunate self,' the blameless Archbishop of Cambray used to say, when he saw some poor rogue being carted by to the gallows. Well, just as the marrow-puddings were being handed round, the awful functionary happened to be holding me in converse on the subject of higher education, and quoth he, 'Sir, were I to go up to-morrow for examination to compete for the post of a tide-waiter, I know very well that I should be plucked.' And yet this functionary old and famous, and is revered everywhere as a wise and learned and good man.

It was never my fortune, and it never will be my fortune, to be highly educated. The jury that sat upon me in my cradle (a jury of matrons, three in number, composed of Mesdames Clotho, Atropos and Lachesis) separated after delivering the significant verdict 'Ignoramus.' I was always a painfully unmanageable and backward boy, and I very much doubt whether the good gentleman who advertises in the *Times* that he will cleanse the blackamoor white and relieve the leopard from his spottedness would be able to make much of me how that I am an old boy, and fat and grizzled, and sick of most things and people. I was so backward at the age of ten that I could neither read nor write nor cipher, save in my head; and what is the good of merely cerebral information? To make money by writing, you must take pen and ink and put your thoughts on paper; to make money by ciphering, you must be able to keep

a set of books by double entry. I was totally ignorant, scholastically speaking, because I was blind; and when I was able to see, I was taken abroad and sent to a school, where the things taught and the manner of teaching them would be deemed by the majority of English preceptors utterly heterodox, demoralising, and 'inefficient,' as the Paul-Pry officials of the London School Board are so fond of dubbing the private-adventure schools, to whose masters and mistresses some parents persist in confiding their children in preference to sending them to a thundering Board school, in which the boys and girls are herded in droves and taught in gangs, and where they run the risk of associating with little ragamuffins and with little pickpockets, and coming home adepts in the use of bad language, the practice of blackguard street-games, and with their clothes and heads in a highly-disagreeable condition. To see the young folks turning out from a Board school when afternoon lessons are over is by no means a pleasant spectacle, and is to my mind not half so edifying, even from an educational point of view, as the sight of a number of chubby little urchins trooping forth from a 'non-efficient' dame school, even if the school were a back-parlour behind a sweet-stuff-shop, lollipops being the reward of the children when they were good, and a slight urtication with birchen twigs their doom when naughty. Bless you, there is no birch in the Board schools! That cruel and degrading chastisement lingers only in the great public seminaries where the pampered children of a bloated aristocracy are trained. Yet now and again we do hear of some hard-featured rawboned Scotchwoman, the mistress of a large public school for the humbler classes, being brought up before a magistrate for having in a fit of passion or a spasm of cruelty slashed some poor child's body from neck to waist into black and blue wheals with a heavy cane.

On the conduct of my education in foreign parts I need say no more in this place, since I dwelt upon it, with sufficient particularity, some seventeen years ago in the introduction to a book called *Twice Round the Clock*. When I returned to my native country, I did for many months nothing whatever which could be considered as scholastically 'efficient;' for reading the *Times* every morning, making abstracts of its contents, painting comic cartoons representative of the problems of Euclid (I never could get any fun out of the demonstrations), and inking in copybooks which should have been filled with specimens of calligraphy, or sums worked out from the *Tutor's Assistant*—to say nothing of reading *Jack Sheppard*, the *Pickwick Papers*, the *Newgate Calendar*, *Tom Jones*, and Bossuet's *Oraisons Funèbres*—were literary exertions of a nature to strike horror into the minds of the College of Preceptors and the School Board for London. But when I was about thirteen years of age, it occurred to my relatives that, as I should have to

earn my own livelihood some day or another, and as that day was apparently not very far distant, and as I was as ignorant of every branch of scholastic knowledge as an English cow may be supposed to be of Hindoostani, I had best, if I was to escape the workhouse or the gallows, to have at least 'one year's good schooling.' I had, as it fell out, two; and these twenty-four months I passed at Dr. Figaro's establishment for young gentlemen at a village some six miles from London, and which I will call Fiddler's Green.

Dr. Figaro, who, when I first beheld him, say two-and-thirty years ago, I thought was the oldest-looking man I had ever seen, but who is still, I believe, alive, a standing refutation to the scepticism of Mr. Thoms (who, I hope, will live to overthrow *in propria persona* his own doctrines of disbelief in centenarians), was known to fame as a 'Pestalozzian' schoolmaster. Pestalozzianism, like the systems of Bell and Lancaster and Jean Jacques Rousseau, of Birkbeck and of David Williams, has long since, I am afraid, fallen 'into the portion of creeds and outworn fables;' nor, indeed, am I at this time of day able to specify with any coherence in what the Pestalozzian system consisted; but (I may mention that subsequently to my leaving foreign parts, and just prior to my introduction to Dr. Figaro, I had paid an unwilling and flying visit—a very flying visit, for I ran away—to an English school of the old-fashioned sort, the old fashions being thrashing, food of a nature to make swine sick, and the continual grinding of the most useless parts of the Greek and Latin grammars) I thought, during the first six months of my residence at Almaviva House, Fiddler's Green, that the Pestalozzian system was the very best method ever devised for the instruction and training of ingenuous youth. The chief characteristics of the system as pursued at Fiddler's Green was that Dr. Figaro never beat his boys, of whom he had some forty or fifty, ranging in age between eight and fourteen years; that we were allowed to learn pretty well what we liked; and that the programme of studies included some of the queerest subjects that the scholastic mind could possibly conceive. I had, for example, an intense aversion to arithmetic, as embodied, at least, by the horribly wearisome and bewildering treatise of Walkingame, and of some equally disgusting and puzzling treatise put forth by some enemy of his species hailing from North Britain, and whose work was published, if I remember aright, under the auspices of Dr. Valpy. Boys owe that prolific schoolboy editor no inconsiderable debt of gratitude; for he spent some thousands of pounds in publishing an edition of the Delphin classics, and tried his hardest to popularise these convenient cribs—Bohn's more convenient literal English translations were yet unborn—but he failed, principally through the opposition of the old-fashioned schoolmasters. The opposition was but natural. A Delphin gloss, albeit it is in Latin, at least gives you a plain ran-

ring of a passage, and you may without much trouble fish the words out in a dictionary;* and the vocation, the mission, and the leading object in life of the old-fashioned schoolmaster was not to teach a boy how to construe Virgil and Horace, but to flog him for being incapable of construing them. A similar bent of mind seems to have actuated Cocker and the long tribe of professional arithmeticians who, following him, wrote what are called 'ciphering books.' Their object was less to explain than to mystify; less to be sweet inspirers, bringing the light, than the children of Nox and Erebus, laden with sacks of intellectual soot, and making all dark and terrible. Can you do a stiff sum in long division, according to Walkingame, even to Colenso? I honestly confess that I cannot. But let me work out a problem in my own way, and I will tell you how many bricks there were in the Tower of Babel if you will give me an area and altitude; and to how much per minute the wages of a 'professed' clerk at thirty pounds a year, and who cannot cook so much as a herring, amount. I am yet in hopes of seeing a sensible manual of arithmetic, involving even its abstrusest problems, produced; but that manual must be based on familiar, and if need be humorous, popular symbolism; and for it to obtain acceptance, the present system of scholastic instruction must be radically revolutionised. Schools must be no longer gaols, and school boys and girls must be no longer made to feel that they are criminals, doomed for a certain number of hours every day to imprisonment with hard labour. At present the really erudite schoolbooks are labyrinthine puzzles, and the professedly simple ones are idiotic. In an old book on hieroglyphics I was looking at lately, I saw the engraving from an antique gem of the monster of Egyptian antiquity, with her beautiful impassible face and stony eyes, and long cruel claws, tranquilly standing in pieces a naked writhing man. The legend to the medal was thus: '*Infelix divinator a Sphinge occisus.*' In that grim picture—the very thought of which yet makes me shudder—I seem to behold an image which, far more significant than Valpy's famous gamma, might be appropriately inscribed on the title-page of schoolbooks—the modern as well as the ancient ones. The sphinx is the schoolbook compiler, and his delegated tormentor the schoolmaster. The *divinator* is the schoolboy; and when (as usually happens) he is *infelix*, the sphinx tucks his head under her arm, and devours him. It is the sphinx's business to devour; but it is surely not that of the boy to be eaten up. The sensible plan

* The fatal objection to the use of the Delphin classics by boys is, their constant employment renders it almost impossible for even the quickest-witted boy to retain a lengthy passage from a classic author in his memory. The marginal gloss persists in flowing over into the text, like Charles I.'s head into Mr. Dick's memorial; and afterwards, when efforts are made to recall a quotation, the student finds himself quoting the Delphin version instead of Virgil or Horace.

to adopt would be to fight the monster—who is but a symbol, himself, after all—by adopting throughout our teaching such a use of pictorial emblems and associative grams as has been adopted in the admirable *Symbolisches Englisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch*, modelled by Mr. L. C. Ragoust from the analogous *Vocabulaire Symbolique Anglo-Français*, and which has been recently revised by Dr. Falck Lebahn. These books are not perfect, since they lack a concurrent system of associative mnemonic symbols; but then the student, 'out of his own head,' and with his own hand, can easily append to the representations of *things* given by Ragoust and Lebahn. Combined with associate emblems, the words become once indelibly impressed on the memory—as indelibly as the rhyme of *Cock Robin* and the *House that Jack built*. I mean to write a book on symbolics some of these days; but one need be no Hippocratic scholar to be convinced in one's own mind, that life is short and art is long, that the occasion is fleeting, and judgment difficult and experience fallacious; and lest I should be called away ere I can do the work, I leave this on record as the dint of a verdant axe marking timber to be felled by wiser woodmen who shall come after me. I am convinced that our present mode of teaching children in schools is essentially and integrally wrong; and I am as fully convinced that the universal application of symbolism to education would be essentially and integrally beneficial. I may observe that symbolism, rightly understood, has little, if any, connection with the absurd and mischievous delusions known as 'systems of artificial memory.' These are mere playthings; but, like brass toys, they are apt to cut the fingers, and to poison them to boot. With the help of Guy's *Memoria Technica*, or the old Latin *Aula Memoria*, I will undertake, in half an hour, to conjugate by heart an Arabic verb; but two hours afterwards I shall probably have forgotten about it. But by the use of a properly digested code of symbols—which must be drawn by the student's own hand, or the symbolism is utterly useless—I will undertake that a lad of ordinary intelligence, wholly unacquainted with any Oriental tongue, shall learn, in the course of a couple of hours, a page of the 'Cow' chapter in the Koran—printed, however, in the Roman character: the acquisition of the Oriental alphabets must be acquired by another and distinct symbolic system; tough work, but to be mastered by a little attention—and that he shall retain the Arabic sentences and their meaning in his memory just as tenaciously as he retains the gibberish about the she-bear that came into the baker's shop, crying 'Soap, soap; what, no soap?' and the gay guests at the great Panjandrum's ball, when they all fell to dancing 'Catch 'er can,' till the gunpowder ran out at the heels of their boots—which he learnt when he was a child, perhaps forty years ago—do you remember the gibberish? Because you dream

were a boy. The cabbage-leaf which she went into the garden to eat, with the view of making an apple-pie; the terrible she-bear with her insatiable appetite for soap; the great Panjandrum himself with his little round button at top, and the very gunpowder as it ran out of the boot-heels of the company who danced 'Catch 'em who can' so furiously. I have said that in order to use symbols properly they must be drawn by the student; and I may expect to be reminded that the graphic faculty is a special gift, or that a knowledge of drawing is with difficulty acquired. To this I would answer briefly, 'Fiddlededee.' I know a vast number of ladies and gentlemen who are wholly unable to execute a view of Netley Abbey by moonlight in water-colours, or of copying one of M. Jullien's huge heads in black and white chalks on tinted paper; but were I an educational Nana Sahib, could I shut up the ladies and gentlemen in a scholastic Cawnpore, and were I enabled to say to one of my prisoners, 'Draw me a cow on pain of instant death,' I will lay heavy odds that my threatened scholar should forthwith produce the draught of something with two horns and four legs and a tail, which, albeit preposterously uncouth and disproportionate, should present a sufficient resemblance to a cow to be recognised as such by a child five years old. So with a cottage, so with cocks and hens, and trees and palings, and churches and hayricks and castles, and soldiers on horseback, and men smoking pipes with dogs at their heels. The drawings would be the vilest scrawls imaginable, but they would be at once recognisable as the things they were intended to represent. Who cannot draw a cross, a wheel, a star, a half-moon, or gallows? Be able to do this—however askew the sketches may be—and you are half through your apprenticeship to the art of symbolism. And who—I speak to grave and reverend and learned men, and austere or accomplished ladies of mature age—has not scrawled cows and cottages, cocks and hens, men smoking pipes, and little dogs with curly tails on the margin of their schoolbooks and their exercising-books at school, when they should have been learning their lessons, or 'doing' their sums, or (with their tongues out) following the movement of the cramped fingers and the inflections of the hard-nibbed goose-quill, painfully transcribing in imitation copperplate, 'Virtue is the highest recommendation,' or 'Repentance precedes atonement'? When a boy or girl comes to be about twelve or fourteen, this wholly intuitive faculty of scrawling simple symbols is looked upon with shame, and gradually falls into disuse; pedantic preceptors proclaim that the boy or girl has no turn for drawing, and the pencil is laid aside, never perhaps to be resumed. In teaching symbolics, I would simply recall and revise, and recall for high and useful ends, a faculty which we all possess—a faculty which little princes and princesses practise in common with the blackguard street-boys who ad walls the effigies of unpopular policemen suspended

from gibbets, and in common with wholly untutored savages—a faculty which is, in fine, apparently innate in all humanity, with the exception, perhaps, of the Bosjesman, in whom there would seem to be nothing whatever inherent save gluttony and lust. I am persuaded that the Almighty never gave any one of His creatures a capacity without the intent that it should be used for some worthy end. Old-fashioned schoolmasters—and new-fashioned ones sometimes—punish children as idlers and dunces for defacing the margins of their books with grotesque figures of men and animals and natural objects. Were they wise, did they even possess a grain of common sense, they would discern in these grotesque figures the half-unconscious efforts of the young soul to symbolise materially that which the eyes of the mind have perceived.

Now read that which I have written in an earnest, an attentive, and a reflective spirit. Don't read it in the spirit of the wretched dullard hack who, for thirty shillings a week, is bound to 'criticise' between thirty and forty monthly magazines and periodicals in a column and a half of a newspaper. I know what *he* will say, the poor knave: 'Mr. Sala gossips amusingly about' .so-and-so; or, perhaps, seeing that I have quitted him over the mazzard in passing, he will turn to and abuse me and my paper—not knowing the first from Adam, and not having read a dozen lines of the second. Mr. Sala's object in writing this article was not to gossip amusingly about anything. 'Dr. Figaro's Establishment for Young Gentlemen' was merely a peg on which to hang an essay pointing out that, with very few exceptions, the educational systems of the day are either barbarous and blundering, or plausibly insincere; and that in nine cases out of ten the time which children pass at school is virtually wasted, because the present mode of teaching is to the pupils wearisome, painful, and disgusting; while in an equal degree it blunts the perceptions, muddles the head, and hardens the hearts of the teachers. Our real schooling generally begins after we have left school; but have not our parents under these circumstances been defrauded somehow of the money they have paid for our education? The fault does not lie at the doors of schoolmasters or schoolmistresses, public or private. The responsibility of our educational failures attaches to misty schoolbooks and a muddle-headed system of teaching.

MRS. MARMADUKE MILLWYN'S SIGH

A Story of Dublin Life

BY NUGENT ROBINSON

CHAPTER I. FASCINATION.

John was setting behind the Dublin mountains in a flood of liquid rain, causing the ruined castle of Montpelier to stand out like a spectral barque grimly floating upon a blood-red sea, as, beneath the shadow of a row of stately elms in the Phoenix-park, a man paced slowly, in unmeasured and uneven strides. It was a glorious summer evening; a soft sensuous glow pervaded the atmosphere, the hum of myriads of insects droning the world to slumber, and the stillness to be felt more intensely. The man ever and anon paused, turning his face in the direction of Chapelizod; and the cautious manner in which he gazed forth from behind his eyes, it was evident that his desire was to remain unobserved, and actually concealed. He was tall and slightly formed, with broad shoulders and great length of limb. His head sat well and his brown curly hair formed a sort of cushion for his forehead, which he felt hat to recline upon. His eyes were dark blue, cleanly set, and of a sort of clear atmosphere of health pervading them; his nose straight, the nostrils being rather wide for the line of beauty; a well-coloured moustache almost concealed his mouth, but very red lips occasionally came to the surface, and very white teeth shone from behind them. He was attired in a suit of light-gray homespun tweed; wore his blue shirt-collar turned down, supported by a sailor-knotted tie of the same hue; and his very small feet encased in patent-leather buttoned boots, varnished with three times the black.

He was a swell, and looked it every inch.

'Hang it,' he muttered under his breath, and tugging violently at the ends of his moustache; 'hang it, she could have been here long ago. This. That infernal Millwyn is just cad enough to keep her waiting for the men he has to dinner and to give them coffee, the brutes, as if they cared for anything but whisky! I know the songs like. Poor little Maude! She's such an earnest, tender, romantic little creature, and so pretty, and so fond of me.'

Here the gallant warrior—for this gentleman skulking behind the elm-trees is a warrior, although he has done nothing but Abyssinian—tugged tremendously at his moustache, as though he were pulling a couple of bells for the purpose of ordering up immediate attention, or desirous of testing those mysterious rules which

formally invite us to stop express-trains, under a penalty not exceeding five pounds, by the simple process of pulling frantically at a very limp cord.

Fitzroy Noel is a lieutenant in the gallant —th. It is only an infantry regiment; but there is a lot of glory to be had out of 'mud-crushing,' and some of the handsomest and most aristocratic-looking men in the British army are to be found behind the regulation tunic and under that uncompromising headpiece the shako. There is no use in attempting to conceal the fact that every man in the infantry would like to exchange into the cavalry if he could; for there is a ring about the word Hussar, and a suggestive dash in Dragoon, that smacks of champagne *crémant* *versus*—ah, well, brandy-and-soda.

Fitzroy was not burdened with much brains; they are troublesome in warm climates, especially if you carry about with you an extreme thirst, that culminates through the medium of stimulating liquids in and about the top of the head; but he possessed any amount of heart, and this superabundant capital was continually being expended in very large and singularly risky investments of Romance. Fitzroy Noel was not Sir Galahad, nor yet Don Quixote, nor Joseph, nor Don Juan; he was a sentimental handsome man of thirty, who depended upon his eyes and the —th for achieving conquests such as a certain set of waltzing, small-talking, idle men essay in every ballroom, every 'at home,' and at every garden-party.

Now, there is a class of married women abroad just now that would be much better in the solitary confinement of their nurseries or their larders or their linen-closets, looking up the buttons on their husbands' shirts, or putting strings to the bibs of their children. These women are what have once been pretty girls; belles who still cling to their past career with the tenacity of the octopus to the crab, and who voluntarily set fire to the weak imaginations of the wanton wicked men by whom they are surrounded, in order to beget a sensual admiration, sooner than be considered no longer pretty, no longer attractive, no longer *young*. These women waltz *à ravir*, leaving their waists in the embraces of their partners long, long after the conventional rules of the dance should of necessity have removed them; who drop their eyelids in a stagey, confused, and palpable way when the man they want to demoralise comes within range; who press the hand at parting in so significant a manner as to mean—well, nothing of course; who always stop short at the brink of the precipice—pshaw! they never go within miles of it; and it is with one of those sirens that we have to deal, and so has Lieutenant Fitzroy Noel of the gallant —th Regiment of Infantry.

The distinguished corps was quartered at Beggar's-bush Barracks, and as a matter of course the mess was well and hospitably treated by the ball-giving people of Dublin. Noel was the best-looking man in the regiment, and the best-dressed man to boot; so his appearance

open, sesame,' and he had six invitations to every other man's whilst poor little Bibbs had to trust to the card which casually runs 'the colonel and four officers,' and Topley's solitary chance dance at the Mansion House, from whence he was bidden to all festivity in the neighbourhood of Rathmines, from which he had in so woebegone and miserable a condition as to compel a long course of brandy neat for at least a couple of hours after he gained sanctuary in the anteroom.

Fitzroy Noel was engaged in paying a stereotyped visit after a stereotyped ball which had come off on the previous night and morning—Square. The room was very dark; the glare of the gas was never pleasant, and the eyes of the hostess looked as if they were set in with inky fingers. She sat with her back to such an extent as was permitted to enter, as is the fashion of ladies who consider pearl-powder a necessity and who disapprove of crow's-feet, although they have been planted by the hand of that industrious man Time. The warrior had got into the conversation so far that he said, 'What a capital ball we had last night!' when the door was thrown open, and the servant announced, 'Mrs. Marmaduke Millwyn.'

With Mrs. Marmaduke Millwyn we have to deal; the lady who is the 'little party' counts for nothing. She may be amiable, sensible, wise, fascinating, but in the story she is only a lay figure used to drape the meeting of Fitzroy Noel and the woman who was destined to—but we must not anticipate.

'What a capital ball we had last night!' again exclaimed Mr. Noel, enamoured of his idea, and anxious to get rid of this rusty thought from the single barrel of his brain.

'Charming,' murmured Mrs. Marmaduke Millwyn in a low tone, although she were engaged in passing sentence upon the man in front of her upon his observation.

'I danced ten rounds and three squares,' drawled the lieutenant. 'You dawnced awfully well,' exclaimed Mrs. Millwyn, with a great deal of enthusiasm.

'You didn't dawnce with me,' observed our hero rather brusquely, turning his head to his languishing glance.

'Oh, no,' with a sigh. 'But I watched you all night, and—suppose I shouldn't say it, but I longed for a *valse à trois* with you.'

'Young gentlemen of the year 1875 and the forthcoming season beware of young married women who address you in this way to a slight acquaintance. Ten to one—ay, a thousand to one—your crazy little boat will commence whirling round and round, fast enough at first, but faster and faster by and by, until you are sucked down into the Maelstrom of this woman's vanity. Make

but one salaam to this idol, and her triumphal car will pass over your squelched hearts, whilst she will laugh 'Ha, ha!' as she urges it forward, and mutter between her set teeth, 'Stupid idiots.'

This delicate rose-coloured bit of flattery fell upon our hero like a refreshing shower upon very dull dry earth. He sucked it in. It soothed him. No man is totally averse to flattery from anybody; one must be a hero to somebody or something. A man *can* be a hero to his valet de chambre, but he must kick the valet de chambre. To be patted on the head (metaphorically) by a pretty woman, and called a good dog and a nice fellow, and to be told to lie down and have one's ear pinched—Whish! St. Simeon Stylites would have hopped from his perch like a venerable raven, St. Anthony would have acted as did the gentle hermit of the dale, St. Kevin would have shared his stony couch, if the young ladies who came to tempt these holy men *had not been in earnest*. The woman who doesn't care a dump for a man, but who makes love to him for pastime, is *dangerous*. She should be labelled, and a Royal Humane Society's drag should be ever at hand to haul the unsuspecting but rash skater from this thin and exquisitely fragile ice.

The sentence spoken by Mrs. Marmaduke Millwyn was a very tiny one, and insignificant enough; but it was broken up into little bits, and a series of small barriers were erected between the words in the shape of hesitations, jujube coughs, the whole thing winding up with a sigh—and *such a sigh!*

Some women can work a Niagara out of a single tear; others can achieve miracles through the medium of a smile; a silvery laugh contains more melody than any composition from Mozart to Offenbach; a graceful turn of the head, such as turned that of Sir Peter Teazle, is a tremendous weapon, whilst a glance of the eye is universally acknowledged as being as destructive as dynamite or nitroglycerine; but I am prepared to back the sigh of Mrs. Marmaduke Millwyn against the smiles, tears, laughs, turns of the head, or *ouillades* of any woman, ancient or modern, from Cleopatra to Miss Jemima Smith—ay, and to lay the odds.

This sigh was a *spécialité*. It was a perfumed mystery. It spoke a small tender volume. It said: 'This little cry from my sad soul is for you; it hungers for companionship. I am weary. I long to tell you all. We were destined to meet, darling, and I have come face to face with my destiny.'

Mrs. Millwyn's sigh was a *parlementaire* bearing a flag of truce; it craved terms for the besieged. It enshrouded you like a delicious vapour, and, opium-like, bereft you of sense only to create visions of boundless intangible ecstasy.

Ay di me Athama! Mrs. Millwyn sighed as she concluded her sentence, and that sigh dropped like hot sealing-wax upon the susceptibilities of the gallant lieutenant. Throb went the blood up

to the citadel of the heart. Throb went the blood up through the brain, at least where the brain ought to be. It did not remain long there, inasmuch as there was nothing very attractive in that region to induce it to tarry. Throb it went to his fingers' ends, and it was as warm as molten lava. Yes, that sigh had harpooned him, and she had but to play him with sentiment to land him, big stupid sentimental fish that he was.

It might be as well to describe the possessor of this sigh. A tall thin woman, sighing suggests an alarming insufficiency of breath; a fat dumpy woman, sighing declares the existence of tightened stay-laces. Mrs. Marmaduke Millwyn was neither tall nor short; she was the exact height of the Venus de Milo, whatever that may be; and she was constructed upon, to use a nautical simile, precisely the same lines as that very classical type. Her colour was that of ivory. She had no complexion. She did not require one. She could have had it at the chemists, for one shilling and sixpence per pot, warranted not to rub off, save upon being brought into immediate and energetic contact with cold water. Her nose was *retroussé* (tip tilted, if it pleases Mr. Tennyson), her gums were pink, and her teeth were very white and very even. *Hélas*, she bit her lips to make them red, and she left very little cuticle upon them.

It's too bad, this vile fashion young ladies have of lip-biting; every man sees it, and it becomes embarrassing. Abelard averts his gaze from his beloved Héloïse for a single second; the next, and he finds her grating her under-lip as if it were a nutmeg. Pyramus glances into the photographic album, and, turning to Thisbe, finds that young lady's pouter half-way down her throat. It's bad form, young ladies; and if you imagine that mankind admire it, take my word for it that you are much in error. Mrs. Marmaduke Millwyn's lips became very thin from constant friction with her teeth, till they resembled a thread-like red line smutched across her face. Her eyes! They were strange eyes—a blue only seen in Chelsea ware or Wedgewood. It was bright, luminous. You wanted something more, but you didn't get it. They attracted whilst they repelled. They were brassy, glassy cold one instant, and in the next melting and soft, as though a muffled glass shade had been placed over them. The lashes, well picked out, were long, and more oily than silky. She had but one inch of forehead, and her honey-coloured hair sat it evenly and well. She was attired upon this particular occasion in corded black silk, fitting her as closely as a riding-habit, and fully as long, and her throat, very much open, was surrounded by a large plain white turn-down collar, supported by a pink kerchief fastened in a sailor's knot.

Lieutenant Fitzroy Noel instinctively drew his chair nearer to her as he almost whispered:

'It's too bad ; I'm very stupid. I missed you—there was such a crowd.'

'Yet we cannoned, and somehow I almost liked it.'

Noel tried back upon his memory for some link to bind himself to the fact of having seen her ; it seemed such bad form not to have felt her presence. Her dress, her bouquet—anything. No. His memory, never particularly good, only travelled as far as a girl in pink who squinted, and then it halted, merely to return by the same pathway to the starting-point.

'You must give me another chance,' he said.

A pause.

'Are you going to Mrs. Sommerville's to-night ?' she asked, timidly yet hopefully.

'Unfortunately I have no invitation,' he replied very ruefully.

'This is dreadfully annoying,' she murmured ; 'I had set my heart upon it.' Then in an earnest tone : 'Surely you can get a card.' And in a whisper, yes, a whisper, she uttered the single word, 'Try.'

That word and its intonation would have caused Lieutenant Noel to storm Seringapatam, if the advisability of taking that stronghold by assault had been then and there determined upon. All the energy in his character marched to the front, with drums beating and colours flying. There was a deed to be done, and that deed was the acquisition of the password by which to obtain entrance into the Sommerville citadel.

'I shall be there, cost what it will,' whispered the gallant warrior hoarsely. He ought to have said, '*Coûte que coûte* ;' but his French was hazy.

By accident the hand of Mrs. Marmaduke Millwyn touched the arm of Fitzroy Noel. Their eyes met. She sighed. He sighed. Another glance, and she arose to leave. 'It's *au revoir*,' she murmured as she brushed by him, her breath passing across his forehead like a warm breeze. He had no word at hand save the single '*Oui* ;' but he threw a bushel of yes's into it, and what it lost in refinement it gained in earnestness. After a few commonplace remarks to the lady of the house, the lay figure already alluded to, Lieutenant Noel departed. There was no time to lose, and every man in the Britannia Club must be pressed into the service for the 'open, sesame.'

CHAPTER II.

INFATUATION.

THE Britannia Club is a large sandy-brick building adorned with plate-glass windows, looking very much like an expressionless face without eyebrows, and is approached by a flight of steps leading on to a sort of balcony, upon which it is the glorification of very young

with closely-cropped hair, and ensigns trying to look like soldiers, and militiamen endeavouring to look like both and failing in either, to lounge and stare at the womankind passing by, many of whom, *hélas*, are composed of that order which is called *demi*. Up to the club dashed Fitzroy Noel, and flinging every a double fare, he sprang on to the platform, where a select party were engaged in discussing the result of a wager which had been made after mess upon the previous night.

'What's up?' asked our hero.

A young gentleman enveloped in a slang suit of a shawl patterned to oblige, volunteered information.

'Why, Jimmy Nott laid seven to two with Whitman of the club that he would eat a pound of dry biscuits—you know, those old cracknel biscuits, that dry up your mouth like—like any—while Whitman, who is a kangaroo to swipe, would sip up a cup of porter with a saltspoon out of a soup-plate.'

'By Jove!' exclaimed the chorus.

'Well, Jimmy Nott bagged a lot of biscuit, and Whitman laid into the porter; but, beggad, he had to keep his old mug well to the plate, and, beggad, it ended in a draw.'

'A draw!' exclaimed the chorus.

'Yes, a draw; for, beggad—haw, haw, haw!—the fumes of the porter got into Whitman's head, and made him beery; and poor Jimmy Nott had to howl for a ball of brandy, or the confounded flour had choked him.'

When the comments consequent upon this exciting narrative somewhat subsided, Fitzroy Noel drew the narrator aside, and asked him if he was going to the ball at the Sommervilles'.

'Beggad, I'm going to three balls to-night, old fig, but hang me if I know the name of one of the people. The cards are in my pocket.'

'No, beggad, here they are;' producing a cigar-case. 'I put this in here to remind me of something, but, beggad, I can't recollect what it was.'

His excellent young fellow, who had just joined the dashing Grenadier Dragoons, handed Noel the pasteboards in question. A scrutiny produced Mrs. Sommerville's name upon one of them. 'Who shot you in here?' asked Noel.

'Don't ask me, old bluebottle; I'll be hanged if I can tell you. I'll go in and have a ball of brandy with a streak of soda.'

'I want to go to this ball,' observed the lieutenant rather anxiously.

'Well, go; there's your ticket, including refreshments,' exclaimed the other rather testily. He was thirsty, poor fellow, and irrelevant questions were standing between him and his liquor.

'I wouldn't care to do this, as I'm on to a most particular line

At this moment a man dressed all over the club, and to within the eighth of an inch of the remainder of his natural life, which was not insured—no office would take him even at a risk premium—radiated upon the steps. A London man would have set him down as one of Poole or Smallpage's foremen airing a suit of clothes for some eccentric swell, who wished to have the gloss taken off before donning them.

'Ah, here's Tiffanay coming to visit De Spicer—he'll get you a card.'

'I don't know Mr. Tiffanay,' said Noel.

'Not know Tiffanay! He's the only civilian worth knowing in Dublin. I say, Tiff; here's Noel of the —th wants to hook on to Sommerville's express to-night. Can you get him a coupling iron?'

'With very great pleasure,' exclaimed Mr. Tiffanay. 'The Sommervilles are particular friends of mine, and I have *carte blanche*.'

Fitzroy Noel asked Tiffanay into the club, and nourished him. The latter proved as good as his word, and the coveted card arrived in due course at Beggar's-bush Barracks.

Whilst Lieutenant Fitzroy Noel is grumbling over the fold of his white tie, and taking a rapid cram from a volume of Tennyson with a view to quotations and extra-refined language, let us see what Mrs. Marmaduke Millwyn is 'a doing of.'

In a very large gloomy-looking house situated between Kilmainham and Chapelizod, which had been in her husband's family for generations, resides Mrs. Marmaduke Millwyn. Of course Mr. Marmaduke Millwyn inhabits this house; but who bothers about a heavy husband when a pretty wife is in question? He very properly goes to the wall, and submits to the process of being snuffed out with the grim and gruesome idea that he is nobody in particular, and that his wife is, to say the least of it, somebody else particularly particular. He makes occasional spasmodic efforts to come to the front; but no, we won't have it—*nous autres*: we send him back to obscurity by quoting his *card* *spoon*, and by expressing a hope of meeting *her* again at so early a date as to impress him with a dim notion that, if he were lying at the bottom of the river flowing opposite his villa residence, not a member of his wife's acquaintance would add to its flow of waters by as much as a single tear.

Mr. Marmaduke Millwyn is 'a City man' possessing a good *clientèle* (everybody has 'clients' nowadays, from your family solicitor to your greengrocer: they used to be customers), and he married 'a penniless lass with a long pedigree,' of military proclivities. He met her at a dance, given during a regatta, at the St. George Yacht Club; scarcely noticed her, but *she* noticed him: this made all the difference. He was badly hit—raked fore and aft, not on account of being unseaworthy, but from the fact of being taken by surprise.

His seductive pirate boarded the richly-laden galleon, and towed him, expeditiously but safely, into the haven of matrimony. He cannot tell how it was done—courtship there was none. He can only recall a series of well-planted sighs; and as drops of water will wear out a stone, so a well-directed set of sighs will force themselves into the heart, causing it more or less uneasiness, and an anxiety to get rid of the gnawing without paying particular attention as to the cost. His wife's friends rather dazzled him at first—they were all directly or indirectly barracky; but somehow he found that the ladies treated him with a languid superciliousness that proved irritating, whilst the gentlemen scarcely deigned to notice him at all; so he gently hinted to Maude (she was baptised Mary Jane, but substituted the mediæval Maude), that he would prefer finding her alone when he got back from the City, instead of being *tête-à-tête* with some inarticulate hussar or insolent linesman, who openly displayed his disgust at the presence of a third party by a prolonged and languishing farewell of the wife, and a curt icy bye-bye of the husband. Mrs. Marmaduke Millwyn resented this by furious outbursts of passion—the City man was unmoved; by tears—the City man was adamant; by hysterics—the City man whistled. Of course she considerably smashed some pet little bits of Dresden and Sevres, and any available crockery at hand—the City man stopped her pocket-money until the damage was made good. What could this tender little dove do in this commercial cage but plunge against the bars and ruffle her plumage? This did not pay, so she gave it up, and took to meeting her friends—elsewhere.

'I don't care to go to this infernal ball to-night,' observed Mr. Marmaduke Millwyn to his spouse, as he proceeded to mix his second tumbler of punch. It would have been more genteel to have placed claret of a comet vintage on the table, say Nat Johnson's Chateau Margot '58; but this is a true story, and although red wine was in the cellar, there was none of it within range on this special occasion.

'We have accepted,' said his wife snappishly.

'Pshaw! they won't miss us.'

'They'll miss you; for Mrs. Sommerville told me yesterday, that her husband wanted particularly to see you.'

There was some mistake here, for the two ladies had not met for three months.

'He knows where to find me if it's business, and he passes my place every day,' observed Mr. Millwyn in a commercial tone.

Now Mrs. Millwyn knew, from a painful experience, that if she appeared anxious to go, her liege lord would put his back to the wall, and would not budge for love or for money. It had so happened, that upon more occasions than one she had wheedled him into sending routs where she mysteriously disappeared until the time

for breaking up was at hand, and then she was dug out of a conservatory, excavated from a deep-embrasured window, or drawn from some small return-room, the existence of which ought to have proved a surprise even to the oldest inhabitant of the house; and strange to say, that on these occasions she was never alone: it was either Mowbray of the Staff—poor fellow, he couldn't dance, having sprained his ankle; or Gosshawk of the Plungers, who considered dancing a bore; or young Mildmay, who wished to consult her with reference to his engagement with Florrie Fulmont; or some other swell, heavily laden with a tangible excuse for not mixing with the giddy throng. Yet somehow or other the City man didn't like it, and actually swore at her the whole way across the Phoenix-park on their return to the villa at Chapelizod.

She dropped the subject of Sommerville's ball, and bided her time.

Mr. Millwyn was fond of punch, and if he exceeded two tumblers, he went quietly up to six, and then up to bed. Mrs. Marmaduke Millwyn with her own fair hands mixed number three, and again number four. Mr. Millwyn began to glow.

'It's time to go and dress, darling,' she said, rising as she spoke, and, crossing to the side of the table at which her husband was sitting, gave him a good substantial chirpy kiss.

The old story, history repeating itself: Hercules and Omphale—Samson and Delilah—the Spider and the Fly.

Lieutenant Fitzroy Noel stood like a sentinel at the entrance to the drawing-rooms at Mrs. Sommerville's. In vain that amiable and excellent hostess offered to get him a partner for the next dance. Ah, no; he muttered an incoherent something, and stood to his post. He was faultlessly attired as usual, and sported a yellow rosebud, for which he had paid, or rather promised to pay, one shilling and sixpence. By and by the sallow servitor, who looked as if he had been brought up by hand on sawdust and train oil, announced 'Mister and Missis Marmaydhuke Millywhinn;' and enter our friend M., who looked ten tumblers instead of the half dozen, and Maude the innocent—the loving—the faithful. Noel's heart banged against his ribs, and displaced a shirt-stud. He was about to advance and speak to her, when a slight frown and a gesture, which said, 'Don't let my husband perceive that we know each other, but go down to that return-room and wait for me there,' bade him act in accordance with its dictates.

'He's so frightfully jealous, if he sees me speaking to a handsome man,' she murmured, when she joined our hero, 'that I'm in a fever of terror; but he is very kind to me, and one cannot have everything in this world.' Here she sighed.

It was a prolonged wail. 'O,' it cried, 'if we had met before I was sacrificed to this brute!' and there it stopped.

'This is our dance, Mrs. Millwyn. I have been looking for you all over the house,' exclaimed a sprightly gentleman in gushing accents, bustling into the boudoir.

'Say I'm engaged to you,' she whispered Noel with electric swiftness, whilst consulting her card.

'I imagine this is our dance, Mrs. Millwyn,' said Noel.

'Number thirteen,' said the new-comer.

'Yes, number thirteen.'

'I fear I have made a double engagement, Mr. Bristow, and that Mr. Noel was first;' and she gazed at Bristow almost reproachfully.

Bristow pleaded for the next; but she was engaged the next, and the next, and yet the next. It was what electricians term dead earth. He bore his defeat manfully, and hoping for better luck next time, bustled out of the apartment, bearing with him the full knowledge of being thrown heavily, and entertaining no love for Mrs. Marmaduke Millwyn, or feelings of friendship for the gentleman seated by her side.

'Where the d—l were you all night?' said Mr. Millwyn to his partner, as they proceeded to muffle in the bright morning light. 'At your old tricks, eh?'

'I was in the drawing-room, and looking at you the whole evening,' she replied.

'You weren't dancing!'

'No; that glass of punch which I took from you, hubby, gave me a headache.'

'Then why didn't you come away?'

'Well, because I saw that *you* were enjoying yourself.'

This was a random shot, and it hit the bull's-eye. She guessed that he was in that mood in which the fiery sherry administered during the evening, and the petroleum champagne which flowed at supper, would add considerably to the joyous state of fever in which he had entered the ballroom; so she fired her bolt, and scored.

It is not necessary for the purpose of this story to detail the number of balls, garden-parties, bands, etcetera, at which Lieutenant Fitzroy Noel met Mrs. Marmaduke Millwyn. The gallant officer lived only in her presence, but beyond a pressure of the hand and an expression of deep interest in his career—albeit the eyes spoke much more, and the sigh placed her nestling on his manly but undecorated breast—he had received no favour, not so much as a cast-off glove or the fragments of a worn-out bouquet.

To do him justice, he behaved with an unscrupulous generosity. He visited Lazarus, Aaron, and Co., and raised fifty pounds upon note of hand for one hundred, at three months after date; but it should be mentioned, to the credit of this highly respectable firm, that in a spirit of magnanimity that reflects the greatest credit upon

them, they insisted upon his taking a quantity of mosaic ornaments with the 50*l.*, which Fitzroy Noel presented to his servant, in lieu of certain arrears of wages due and unpaid. The choicest bouquets, boxes of gloves (four buttons), a châtelaine with grotesque trinkets, boxes at the Gaiety Theatre, the newest music, and the other delicate and gentlemanlike gifts flowed from the fifty pounds, until that sparkling well dried up; then the gallant lieutenant had recourse to another friendly Israelite, who 'did a leetle sthrap' for him, only to be melted for similar purposes.

And in exchange for all this butterfly attention he had only received a succession of sighs.

Fitzroy Noel had just succeeded in sucking beneath his bay-coloured moustache the first spoonful of a very fiery soup, when a letter enclosed in a tricornered pink envelope was discreetly slipped into his hand by one of the mess waiters. Noel, hastily tearing open the envelope, read as follows:

'I must see you at once. I shall be at the nine elms in the Phoenix-park at 8.30. The "ogre" has some wretched men to dinner. Keep beneath the trees. To be seen is destruction to both.

MAUDE.'

It wanted but a few minutes to eight o'clock. Fitzroy Noel, starting to his feet, had to change his dress, and to drive right across the city, yet a good horse would do it. His companions in arms were very facetious upon the subject of his disappearance, and as his devotion to Mrs. Marmaduke Millwyn was familiar to them as tattoo, they had a huge guffaw, and commented with considerable astuteness upon the immediate cause of his unexpected departure.

'Drive to the Phoenix-park as hard as you can,' said the lieutenant to the carman, whose vehicle stood in readiness at the barrack gate.

'Beggora, I'll rowle ye there while ye'd be takin' a pint,' exclaimed the charioteer, giving his horse a cheery 'Gelang, ye divile,' accompanied by a vigorous thwack with the butt-end of his whip.

'I'll go bail yer goin to dine wid the Lord Liftinint, Captain.'

The driver was of a social turn.

'No.'

'Faix, thin, ye might do worse nor that, Major.'

Noel was in no mood for conversation, and gave no sign.

'I tuk a couple av th' army there th'other night out av the barracks beyant at Portobello, an I was thrated like a lord. "Ye'll come back for us," sez wan. "Och, beggora I will wid all me hart," sez I. "Be here at eleven," sez he. "I'll be here sooner nor that," sez I, "for divile resave the foot I'll stir till yez come out." It war afther wan whin they wor done atin an dhrinkin, an I wos nearly bet up, an thin, Curnel, they wint battherin, an nearly

scalded me. A five-poun Bank-av-Ireland note wudn't in-
fy me, let alone the few shillins I got. A battherin job is the
tack a poor carman can pick up.'

Our hero was preoccupied, and perceiving this, the charioteer
and his farther observations to his horse.

'Where to now, Giniral?'—the lieutenant had received very
promotion at the hands of his Jehu. 'Where to?' demanded
river as they dashed into the park.

The nine elms. Do you know them?'

Know them! Do I know me Pather an Avvy? Do I know me
? Do I know the regulashins av the poliss?—curse o' Crum-
on them! There's the threes over beyant, an finer timber there's
be found in Europe or Asia, likewise Arabia.'

They bowled along the soft greensward and reached the trysting-
. The splendid old elms threw the shades of their crisp foliage
the emerald verdure lying at their feet, but no female form was
to share it.

Mrs. Marmaduke Millwyn had not yet arrived.

'What am I to pay you?' asked our hero of his charioteer.

Shure, I'll lave it to yer anner.'

I don't want that. What am I to pay?'

The man removed his hat, proceeded to scratch the side of his
(and eyeing the officer inquisitively—

Well, Curnel, it's worth a crown anyhow.'

It's worth nothing of the kind,' said Noel.

Well, Major, ye'll make it four-and-six.'

I will not make it four-and-six.'

Begorra, Captain, look at the baste! She's in a lather—look
baste, an say four shillins.'

I'll give you half-a-crown, and it's more than your fare,' ob-
l the officer, tossing him the coin.

Fare!' exclaimed the man indignantly. 'An ye talk to me av
re, after I dhrivin ye as if yo wor runnin away from a battle.

Och, be the powers, Liftinint, that's too bad intirely. Lave
xpence to dhrink yer health.'

Our hero turned away.

Be me song, he's only an insign afther all,' muttered the car-
as he drove off in the direction of the city.

To smoke a good cigar under a tree upon a beautiful evening in
summer-time is a very delightful sensation, and in order to
it perfect, one should have just arisen from a good dinner,
at peace with meat and drink. In addition to this, the
should be tranquil, and *atra cura* ten thousand miles away,
very least. If the truth must be told—and it *shall* be—Lieut-

Fitzroy Noel was very hungry, very thirsty, and very anxious.
'faire ladye' with whom he was 'keepinge tryste' had only

named one hour later, it would have made all the difference. The gallant warrior had partaken of an s.-and-b. for breakfast, as he had cut into a little game at *vingt-et-un* upon the previous night, which kept him out of his hammock until daylight; had lunched upon a glass of sherry-and-bitters; and had just sat down to mess, with that vigorous and unnatural appetite which is the result of a prolonged fast, consequent upon a derangement of the system, when he was cut off from the base of his supplies by the little pink advanced guard sent forward by that skilful commander-in-chief, Maude Marmaduke Millwyn. The lieutenant smoked hard, fast, and fiercely. It was tobacco *versus* hunger and thirst. He pulled at his amber-tipped moustache, walked up and down beneath the elms in uncertain impatient strides, and proceeded to utter the exclamation with which the reader became acquainted at the opening of this eventful narrative.

Let us leave the hungry lieutenant under the elm-trees, and ascertain what is detaining Mrs. Marmaduke Millwyn.

Now, this innocent flirtation—is that the correct term? I suppose it is—had been blossoming for about two months and a half. The platonic theory had been tested—not by any crucial test, it is true, but by certain *formule* known to those analytical chemists who experimentalise upon the inner life of the heart. Mrs. Millwyn had treated Mr. Fitzroy Noel as though he had been the last rose of summer. She reflected back his blushes—*i.e.* when she could—and had given him sigh for sigh; or rather she had laid the odds, and given seven to one. A blush is a very interesting thing in its way, and so is a sigh; but an unvarying succession of blushes and sighs would cause Corydon to yawn, and Phillis to rub her eyelids and to think wistfully of the dormitory.

Toujours perdrix! Ah, my right royal friend, these two insignificant words would not have lived after you if they had not been fraught with a meaning much deeper than a draw-well, and considerably wider than a church door. It would not pay to expatiate upon them. They were delivered, my liege, in reference to—*mais revenons à nos moutons*. Mrs. Marmaduke Millwyn had attended the Curragh race-meeting, and had met the Hon. Mawley De Boots, who had just joined the 48th Hussars. De Boots had erected a canvas banqueting-hall upon the soft, dry, spongy heather, and a silken flag, with the arms of De Boots, flung itself boldly to a breeze that—came not. To this shrine Mrs. Marmaduke Millwyn made pilgrimage. Fitzroy Noel's gloves fitted *à ravir*, and his *châtelaine* dangled against the lithe form of its fair owner like a sabretash. The repast was 'all there, end on.' The lobster was fresh, and the salad was fresh, and the cream was cream. The champagne was iced, not chilled, and it was Giesler's extra superior, of the vintage of 1865 (very scarce). Poor Fitzroy Noel was on duty at the Bank

Ireland, and could not run down to the races. He was engaged helplessly wandering between Foster-place and Tom Moore's fly in College-street, these two points being the Alpha and Omega, or the limits, of his bailiwick, and hopelessly thinking of some impossible mode of establishing such an account at the Bank would enable him to defy the myrmidons of the law, and to reside in a villa on the Lake of Como, with Maude, darling Maude, by his side.

It will be admitted that a gallant hussar dispensing lobster- salad and champagne at a race-course, is a more desirable acquaintance than a linesman on penal servitude at a bank; and so thought Maude Marmaduke Millwyn.

Once, only once, during the *déjeuner* did she sigh. She had caught the available eye of De Boots—for whilst one eye was at attention, the other stood at ease—and, fixing it with a full-fledged gaze, sent forth the sigh to rivet the optical fetter. De Boots caught it, and, swallowing a square inch of lobster, escaped out of the frying-pan of choke to flop into the fire of love.

Pity him, ye matrons who possess marriageable daughters!

Pity him, ye virgins who would marry if ye got the chance!

The Hon. Mawley De Boots paid Mrs. Marmaduke Millwyn the most devoted attention: asked permission to call at the villa at Chapelizod, and was refused, but in such a way as to intimate—

'You dear, delightful, dangerous fellow, what *would* my husband say? Patience! we are sure to meet elsewhere. It is destiny.'

This was the fly that landed a trout rejoicing in the name of Del. Finding it a 'killing' one, she puts it up again, and recommenced her fishing.

De Boots had no occasion to visit financial synagogues, or to present his autograph to hook-nosed Israelites. 'Mawley De Boots,' written in sprawling round-hand upon an oblong piece of paper, and hooked across the mahogany counter of Coutts and Co., would meet with a crisp or metallic response, and the hussar spoiled blank leaves with as much *sang-froid* as ordinary mortals write orders to their tradespeople. Fitzroy Noel's paltry gifts shrank into their native insignificance beneath the blare and glare and dazzle of those of the Honourable Mawley. Bouquets from Covent-garden; gloves direct from Jouvin et Cie., in boxes got up in mediæval fashion, and in high art; costly gimcracks— But our hero is pacing beneath the nine elms, and we are forgetting him.

Mrs. Marmaduke Millwyn held counsel with herself as to the best mode of throwing over Lieutenant Fitzroy Noel. She was, in English, dead sick of him and his maudlin sentimentality. Compared with the sprightly De Boots, he was ginger-beer by the side of sparkling burgundy. She had had enough of him. The

flirtation imparted sufficient excitement to her life, outside its necessary routine. She no longer required it; for she had found it elsewhere, and too much of it meant nausea. What cared she that she had led Fitzroy Noel into love and into debt? he had no right to be in either. She was a married woman, and he ought to have known better than to have imagined that she could have, or would have, reciprocated any feeling other than fraternal friendship. Stupid muff! She had no patience with him. But how to get rid of him? It should be done diplomatically. It would never do for this nameless lieutenant to go forth and proclaim his being put upon her half-pay list, *vice* De Boots promoted.

Very amiable men have been known to turn rusty under somewhat similar circumstances, and to proclaim their dopedom in cynical and full-flavoured language. There was but one way of letting go the painter, in order to set the boat adrift in such a manner as to avoid capsizing it. She sat down and wrote the note which we have just read. This epistle was indited two days prior to that upon which it was despatched; for she was not quite certain as to whether Mr. Millwyn would attend a masonic dinner, to which he had been invited, or not; and it was only when that worthy person returned to Chapelized for the purpose of incasing himself in the stereotyped garments which constitute evening costume *de rigueur*, that she was enabled to put her design into process of execution.

It suited her purpose to pretend that her husband, *alias* the 'ogre,' was entertaining a select few; it proved her devotion and recklessness of consequence to Fitzroy to thus steal forth from her home to snatch a few brief honeyed moments with *him*.

What a wondrous invention is pearl powder! What a becoming paleness it imparts! not the pallor consequent upon severe mental misery or acute physical anguish, but a soft sensuous tone, creamy and velvety. Just another dab under the eyes, Mrs. Marmaduke Millwyn; and do not bite your lips till you reach the trysting-place!

He sees her coming; his heart is beating like a Nasmyth hammer. She looks charming in that cloud of intangible white muslin and quaint little Gainsborough hat, turned up with blue, and the long blue feather sweeping over her shoulders. She is very pale, and she trembles like a terrified child as she gives him both her hands.

'Maude!' he exclaims. He would say more, but a large lump is sticking in his throat, and he feels just as if he had plunged into very deep and very cold water.

'I wrote you a note,' she says, nervously pressing his hands. 'I—I—couldn't help it. O, why did we ever meet?' Here she withdrew her hands, and, seizing her handkerchief, buried her face in its dainty folds; that is, she pretended to bury her face, but she held the handkerchief out from her, so as to protect the coating of

pearl powder ; and improving the occasion, she whirled her lips between her teeth until the angry blood came nearly through.

'My husband suspects ; *you* must be saved. It doesn't matter about *me*. Your future must not be destroyed. Were I to be discovered here now, he would murder me.'

The lieutenant groaned.

'He would shoot *you*,' she continued, in a palpitating way. 'Ay, shoot you like a dog.'

'He is a ruffian !' blurted Fitzroy Noel.

'I—I—resolved to risk everything, and came here to save you.'

'Angel !' murmured Fitzroy Noel.

She saw, with a woman's unerring perception, that she was on the right rail ; that Noel appreciated the sacrifice she was making for him ; that he loved her all the better for it ; and, what pleased her considerably more, that he was not prepared to ask her to fly with him.

'You must get leave of absence, and quit Ireland for the present. You must try and forget me.'

He leaned against a tree, and smote his forehead, whilst he frequently ejaculated, 'Never !—never !—never !'

'Yes, you must. I know that I shall die.'

More handkerchief.

Fitzroy Noel, with that sneakiness of conscience with which all moral burglars are more or less afflicted, became fully alive to the situation. Here, the irate and bloodthirsty husband ; there, flight with the object of his adoration. Flight—ay, but first-class railway tickets are expensive luxuries, and continental hotel-keepers are not philanthropists. Fly, indeed ! He should fly a kite in the direction of Hebrew land, and the wind was not particularly favourable in that quarter ; the pieces of paper already sent out were coming to earth, with a pretty fair chance of a smash-up. Then, assuming flight to be possible, would stalk forth that grim spectre known as action at law, and then—Fitzroy Noel called upon prudence, and prudence replied with a faint squeak, so as to indicate that there was very little of it available. However, the stock in hand was sufficient, and he speedily utilised it. Of course, as a gentleman, he felt bound to ask her 'to share his lot in some foreign land,' resolving not to press the point in any way, but to accept a negative with heroic self-denial.

'Maude,' he exclaims, 'the time has passed for trifling. You know what I feel for you ; that I would risk anything—anything—for you. You love me ?'

Here she handkerchiefed.

'You love me ; do not deny it, dearest.'

She preserved a masterly inactivity.

'Share my lot ; leave the man who is unworthy of you, and come to one who loves you to distraction.'

She knew he was acting, and felt a fierce desire to say, 'I am thine,' in order to enjoy his consternation ; but she had been under the elms long enough, and she resolved upon cutting matters short.

'Fitzroy —' she commenced ; and then, with a shriek, 'My husband ! I'm lost.'

It must be confessed that the gallant warrior ensconced himself behind a tree with more energy than grace. A man might be seen in the dim distance, but he was proceeding in an opposite direction. It suited somebody's purpose, however, to conjure him into the shape of Mr. Marmaduke Millwyn.

'Farewell, Fitzroy Noel. We must meet no more' (sigh). 'Think of me as utterly heartbroken' (sigh), 'but think of me as one who loved you not wisely, but too well' (three sighs) ; and taking his hand and pressing it to her lips, she was gone ere he could realise the fact of her departure.

It would have been very easy for him to have followed her, but he remained rooted to the spot. He continued buried in thought for a few minutes, and then turned in the direction of the city.

Did he throw himself into the Liffey?

No.

He jumped upon a car which happened to be passing, drove to Burton Bindon's, and ordered supper.

Mrs. Marmaduke Millwyn reached Knockmaroon in safety ; she conjured up the remains of a cold duck and some beer, and she too had her supper. How strange that these two people should be engaged in precisely the same manner, after so startling a crisis in their respective destinies !

The *Gazette* of this month contains the following announcement:

'Sub-lieutenant Jamaica Honduras Jones to be lieutenant, *vice* Lieutenant Fitzroy Noel, who retires from the service.'

The *Irish Times*, under the head of 'Fashionable Intelligence,' announces the following arrivals at the Victoria Hotel, Bray:

'Mr. and Mrs. Marmaduke Millwyn.

'The Hon. Mawley De Boots,' &c.

What brings De Boots to the Victoria at Bray?

Quien sabe !



M. Kerns, del.

Edmund Evans

THE FAIR

THE FAIR CRITIC

An *ex-post-facto* Poem

' So read my *magnum opus*, dear,
And, reading, dare to criticise :
A maiden author need not fear
The judgment of those loving eyes.'

Spell'd by that critic's dulcet voice—
' My points a reader scarce can miss,'
Cried the aspirant ; ' I'll rejoice,
Though cackling critics dare to hiss.

To trust the world's warm human heart
In such a case can scarce be wrong ;
It knows how 'tis the poet's part
To learn in suffering, teach in song.'

Thus sped the fair one page by page
Along her lover's scroll poetic ;
Said he : ' When woman rules the age,
Critiques will grow more sympathetic.'

The tiny tome was finish'd now,
And straight return'd with action dutiful ;
When, having kiss'd the poet's brow,
Her lips pronounced their verdict, 'Beautiful !'

And so a bright hour fleet'd by
In love-talk, poesy, and laughter.
Alas, 'twas mine that bard to spy,
Solus and solemn, three months after.

To her he still was all in all,
His work still perfect on that latter day ;
Himself collapsed and feeling small,
Snubb'd by the *Pall Mall* and the *Saturday*.

MAURICE DAVIES.

COCOA PLANTATION IN THE WEST INDIES

NOTHING is more surprising to those who know the West Indies than that so few should visit those beautiful islands for pleasure. Their varied loveliness would well repay a tourist for a little inconvenience from heat and mosquitoes, and a short voyage, which, under ordinary circumstances, is even enjoyable. The wild richly-wooded mountain scenery is magnificent, the soft green of the cane-fields lovely; but surpassing both is the beauty of a cocoa plantation. During a visit to the West Indies I passed some time on one; it was in the mountains, several hundred feet above the level of the sea. The climate was quite European, the thermometer seldom rising above seventy-six, and very often steady at seventy. I had heard much of the beauty of this estate, but it quite surpassed my expectations. The view from the house was charming. In the distance the deep-blue sea, in the valley below the groves of cocoa-trees interspersed with cocoa-nut-trees and stately palmistes; here and there a patch of sugar-canes, then a negro-hut peeping from the trees: nothing could be more charming. The immense variety of trees planted to shelter the cocoa renders a cocoa estate unusually interesting and beautiful, and so shady that it is seldom too hot to walk at any hour of the day. The cocoa-tree, so often confounded with the cocoa-nut-tree, is about equal to a good-sized apple-tree; the pod that encases the bean, of which chocolate is made, is something the shape of a lemon, but three times as large and is of a deep-orange colour—the kind called 'Caraccas' cocoa is so deep as to be almost red. The pods grow on the branches and on the stem itself, quite down to the ground. The branches do not grow low, so that in looking down a cocoa piece of ground, the vista is like a miniature forest hung with thousands of golden lamps. Anything more lovely cannot be imagined; it is perfectly unique. After the pods are picked they are cut open with a cutlass; the beans, which are tightly packed together and from forty to eighty in number, are dried in drawers in the sun, after having gone through a process called 'sweating,' which is being packed close in a barrel and covered over. When the cocoa is thoroughly dried it is put into bags, each containing 150 pounds, and shipped.

Of the trees planted to shelter the cocoa I will describe but a few. The 'caracoli,' as large as an elm, is planted in rows; it is a splendid evergreen, bearing a sweet white blossom. Among the other very large trees are the bread-fruit, the shaddock, and

the glorious mango, which is the size of a large horse-chestnut, and is as thickly covered with leaves. The fruit is not unlike an egg-plum in shape, but three times as large and of a beautiful golden colour streaked with red. A tree in full bearing is indeed a sight worth seeing. Of the smaller trees the orange ranks first in beauty and usefulness. It grows to a considerable size, and bears at the same time the delicious blossom, the ripe fruit, and the unripe green. Next comes the nutmeg, which is also of considerable size. It is thickly covered with dark-green leaves. The outer covering of the nutmeg looks exactly like a large apricot. When ripe it bursts open, disclosing the brown nutmeg covered with a network of mace of a bright scarlet. It is extremely pretty, unlike anything else. The clove-tree also flourishes here; it is a large and pretty tree, covered with clusters of cloves, which are of a delicate pink and white, looking like wax. Another lovely tree is the Malacca apple. It is much larger and more thickly covered with leaves than an English apple-tree, the leaves shining and of a very dark green, the fruit, about the size of a middle-sized apple, of a bright rose colour, and when the tree is covered with these the effect is superb; the blossom is also of a beautiful rose colour. The fruit is slightly astringent and very refreshing.

I could describe an endless number of trees, shrubs, and plants which flourish in this favoured clime, but will only add a few of the English plants I saw growing here. Roses of the sweetest kind in profusion, white jasmine, heliotrope, trees of Cape jasmine, yarbenum, and oleander; all kinds of English vegetables—potatoes, peas, French beans, cabbage, carrots, and turnips. The labourers have all large provision-grounds of their own on the estate, which they find so profitable that they constantly shirk the estate-work in order to cultivate them. The independence of the negroes is rather startling to a person going out from England, and the veriest martinet that ever left the English shores will find, ere many West India suns have risen over his head, that it is useless to expect from labourer or domestic servant the deference and respect to which he has been accustomed in his own country. The negro is free, and he takes good care to tell you so. The amount of insolence to which people submit from the 'poor oppressed negro' is astonishing. If a servant is found fault with, he will turn his back and walk off, chattering as he goes, perhaps telling you to find some one that will please you 'more better;' or even take himself or herself off altogether, leaving you to discover it when you find your bell unanswered or your dinner uncooked. These things are of daily occurrence; insolence and insubordination are the rule, civility and submission the exception. I have known a well-conducted servant say, 'Massa, you well stingy,' and 'Missis, you really cross to-day.' The volubility of the women is marvellous:

when taxed with a fault, which you have perhaps seen them commit, they assume an air of injured innocence, gesticulate in the most frantic manner, gabble on, running one sentence into another without making a moment's pause; and they do this with so much cunning and dexterity, that it is impossible to fix them; they slip through your fingers, and finally walk off triumphantly, leaving you almost inclined to think that your own eyes have deceived you. Unfortunately, people so often find themselves in dilemmas about their *ménage*, that they are glad to take the first servant who offers, without making inquiries as to character, and thus the evil perpetuates itself. In spite of this the negro servants, even in these days, often become attached to families in which they have lived for any length of time. The perfect sangfroid with which these people make their remarks on you is amusing. They are not only made in your hearing, but are intended for you to hear. They will say, 'That leady pretty,' or 'That leady ugly too much,' as the case may be. I have heard a woman say as I walked through the village to church, 'Dat make tree Sunday that leady wear de seam dress;' and upon another occasion when I omitted to respond to the 'How d'ye, missis?' 'Dat leady ain't got no mannars.'

Those who visit the West Indies must be prepared to have their patience a good deal tried; but there is so much to repay them for any trifling inconvenience they may suffer, that few who have the courage to make a trial trip will, I think, ever look back upon the time so spent with any feeling but one of satisfaction.

M. R. S. ROSS.

OXFORD RAFFLES

No. II.

THERE are some lucky fellows in this world of ups and downs whose money seems like a boomerang. Fling it how and where they will, carelessly or carefully, it is certain to come back to their feet. It may not, it is true, return from its hemispherical voyage loaded with interest, but then it never sticks fast *en route*; so that its happy possessor, if he does not gain, is freed at all events from loss. In raffles the tendency of fortune is not to gravitate towards the vendor. There are, however, exceptions to every rule; whereof the following appears to be a notable one:

Mr. Seaton Tuke was a gentleman who, in the earlier stage of an illustrious academic career, belonged to Christ Church. He played, however, only too soon, the part of Vesuvius towards the surrounding country in regard of that great and aristocratic institution. In plain English, he made the place too hot to hold him; his dons therefore eventually bowed him out of Tom Gate with a *bene cessit*; which, being interpreted, is, not as you might suppose, 'He left his college with credit to himself;' but rather, 'It's a good job he has gone.' Turned out into the street, Mr. Seaton Tuke appealed to that most distinguished and respectable don, Dr. Wellesley—who, in virtue of being connected in some sort of left-hand way with the hero of Waterloo (then Chancellor of the University), held the post of Head, or Principal, of New Inn Hall, a quiet sort of 'crib' in a back street, vulgarly known as 'The Tavern'—to afford him shelter. The doctor made not the slightest demur, contenting himself with a simple inquiry as to whether he was prepared to deposit caution money and recoup the outgoing man for his furniture. Hence, within a few minutes, Mr. Seaton Tuke, not being absolutely insolvent, found himself comfortably seated in a two-floor back room commanding extensive views of the Berkshire hills, and the actual proprietor of upholstery rather curious than efficient—eight chairs having only nine legs between them, and the sofa trusting to the wall to supply the absence of two of its former supports.

That night the more jovial and ultra-rackety members of his old college assembled to house-warm their friend. Deep were the imprecations hurled against the tyrant dons of Christ Church, who had had, as they averred, the unparalleled effrontery to eject from

their society a hearty good fellow on the paltry ground violated consistently every iota of college and university. In reply to such amicable sentiments, which were to be paid, Mr. Seaton Tuke, deeply affected, assured one *carlum non animum mutavit*; that after all the change floor in Peckwater to an attic in 'The Tavern' was not points of advantage. He reminded them that, in contrast the honour and glory of being members of 'The House' (name for Christ Church), they were subject to the awful early chapel, the irksome routine of stupid lectures, at least, were obliged to eat very inferior dinners destitute and to drink beer which he would define as mud in vinegar in summer. Whereas, in the peaceful retired 'Tavern,' early devotion was optional; there were no lectures with hunting arrangements; the commissariat was open to a gentleman, champagne being kept in the buttery; Dr. Wellesley had obligingly given up the dining-hall, common-room for his men, subjoining the very reasonable that cards were to be stopped sufficiently early in the evening to enable the porter to prepare the said dining-room for next day. There were there celebrated, the pious founder not having chapel. In short, Mr. Seaton Tuke boasted that he was a paradox—a man in disgrace and yet in luck.

About this time it happened that this gentleman's father, a block not dissimilar to the chip he left behind in Oxford. Moreover, when the said block's affairs began to go up his friends called him a blockhead; for he had so much property that, instead of a handsome competency, all he left to his hopeful son was a few hundred pounds and a Loadstone, a quadruped of repute in the Pythley country.

On Mr. Seaton Tuke's return from his father's funeral he covered a small levée of grim personages awaiting him. Also on his table were placed a shoal of envelopes, each like snail-shells, contained something nasty. He was hurt, too, he was hurt that a set of creatures who fawned and grovelled should select such a moment for their attack. Ergo, he addressed them, one and all, in the language of poets, and actually went so far as to kick a certain lady down the stairs.

On the morrow an official called, and blandly served him a pile of summonses in the Vice-Chancellor's Court—London, remember.

His first impulse was to swear, his second to cry for pay.

He obeyed the latter, and, under the circumstances, was the wisest of the three.

His enemies grinned—yes, grinned in his face. They knew very well that he was cleaned out, and with every demonstration of sarcastic respect begged to decline his future orders.

What was to be done? He could not, even if he read, take his degree for at least two terms, and yet, as he expressed it, he possessed no assets but his wardrobe and his mare.

At this ugly crisis he could but consult his bosom friend Cinqbars of 'The House.'

To his surprise Cinqbars did not entreat him to accept the loan of a thousand pounds as a temporary accommodation. This was odd, inasmuch as, were their positions reversed, and were *he* heir to fifty thousand a year, Mr. Seaton Tuke felt convinced that he could not have offered *his* friend less.

'I must part with the mare, I suppose,' he stammered forth in a melodramatic tone, as though such a sacrifice would be the last rather on a pile of agony.

'I expect she'd fetch three hundred at Tattersall's,' was the calm reply.

This was too much for Mr. Seaton Tuke's sturdy manliness. A sob—or something like it—convulsed his frame. He really was proud of being owner of that famous hunter as is a peer of his coronet, or a bishop of his lawn.

'I'm beastly sorry,' remarked his friend, with a gush of compassion.

'What's the good of that?' grunted Mr. Seaton Tuke savagely. He had descended rapidly, under the pressure of necessity, from his ordinary euphuistic platform.

'Right you are,' replied Mr. Cinqbars, with charming indifference. "'Tears, idle tears," you know, "they are so doosid mean." My sister sings a song with those words for a chorus.'

Evidently Mr. Cinqbars had not been a student of the poetry of the Victorian era.

'Ta-ta, Cinq,' observed Mr. Seaton Tuke, copying imperfectly his friend's sangfroid as he lit his last cigar, and prepared to depart, disgusted and disheartened.

'Don't go, old pal,' cried Mr. Cinqbars dryly.

'Well?' said the other, returning to his seat, dismally.

Mr. Cinqbars lighted a lovely bobo. He was one of those men who never can think unless they smoke.

'You must be pulled—puff—through—puff, puff—somehow.'

'How?' rejoined Mr. Seaton Tuke petulantly.

'Well, you see,' answered Mr. Cinqbars explanatorily. 'if you are to pitch into deep Martin and couldn't swim, it would be open to me, when a dozen fellows were standing on the bank, to jump in and pull you out, whereby I should get an infernal ducking. Or the whole lot of us might chuck in the grappling irons, and by one

haul drag you out. That would be the same for you, and it would be *drier* for me.'

Mr. Seaton Tuke's features began to relax. Perhaps Cinqbars might not turn out such a monster of ingratitude after all.

'I'm for joint-stock enterprise and limited liability,' continued that gentleman. 'For instance. You want coin. You say to yourself, "Cinqbars is a chum of mine. Cinqbars is well to the fore. Let him shell out."'

'I—I never said so, Cinq,' urged Mr. Seaton Tuke submissively.

'You looked so; and as Euclid has prettily put it, "Things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another." That's smart, considering that he was a Cambridge man.'

'Don't let's argyfy,' interposed the other impatiently.

'Good. I'll come to the point without farther parables. I'm willing to do my quota to serve a friend, but I think other people ought to contribute theirs. Moreover, to be candid, I am of opinion that however down a man may be on his luck, he will do well to avoid obligations, which are ugly things for both parties. My proposal, therefore, is this—that you put your mare up for a raffle, at say 400*l.*, in forty shares of ten pounds each. I'll engage that every share shall be taken, and farther, in order to give you a chance of winning the mare yourself, I'll make you a present of ten shares.'

It would be untrue to assert that Mr. Seaton Tuke's visage rose at this really handsome offer of his friend; nevertheless, there was in it so much of sterling good-nature and quaint common sense that he was fain to thank him cordially as 'one of the right sort,' and to close with his offer without a moment's hesitation.

On the following evening thirty gentlemen met in Mr. Cinqbars' rooms in Christ Church, and the famous mare (Loadstone), after being raffled for with due formality, was won by the owner.

'Gentlemen all,' cried Mr. Cinqbars, as he announced this happy result, 'you will, I know, join with me sincerely in congratulating our friend Tuke on his luck. For myself, I can say from my heart that I had ten times rather the mare remained in her old stables than that she was transferred to mine. I propose that we drink the bay lady's health with three times three.'

As he uttered these cheery words, the pop of corks was heard outside, and, presto, there entered a brace of scouts, bearing champagne enough to put not merely thirty but sixty losers into the best of tempers.

'Cinq,' murmured Mr. Seaton Tuke pleasantly, after the rest had departed—'Cinq, old bird, I'm very grateful; but you must let me return you the hundred for those ten shares.'

But 'Cinq' would hear of nothing of the sort. 'My boy,' he replied, 'I stood to win on one share; and if I had won, I tell you that I should have stuck to Loadstone.'

With four hundred pounds in his pocket, and no discipline to disturb him, Mr. Seaton Tuke thought that reading would be just at present superfluous; so he stuck steadily to amusement, and his degree seemed farther off than ever. Idleness, like every other weed, grows apace, and becomes masterful over the dull earth. Hence, when the all-precious four had dwindled down to one, and when the one had dichotomised itself into fifty, and at last the fifty into twenty-five, Mr. Seaton Tuke found steady toil more distasteful than ever, and began seriously to contemplate enlistment in the army, or a migration to the colonies.

At this crisis in the history of his early fortunes, Mr. Seaton Tuke for the second time perpetrated a fluke. Loadstone, during the winter months, had been covering herself with glory in the Heythrop country. Her owner was not a bad 'jock,' and a light-weight withal. Under his steering she had swum over those terrestrial apples, the stone walls and quick-set hedges, like an R.Y.S. cutter in the Solent. In short, she increased her already established reputation so fully that Lord Montaigne of Christ Church asked, through his nearest friend, what Mr. Seaton Tuke would take for her, a heavy price being hinted—heavier by many sovereigns than the good steed was worth.

The offer tempted the poor man's nerve. He had, however, twenty-five pounds in his pocket; and moreover the tradesmen, finding that he did not levant with his tail between his legs, as they had anticipated, but, on the contrary, lived quietly and paid ready money, began to solicit coyly but greedily his patronage. They hinted that he must have some secret source of income, to bear himself thus jauntily—a supposition which induced them blindly to reprove their confidence. Hence he peremptorily declined the noble lord's overtures, avowing that he did not desire at present to part with the mare.

Lord Montaigne was chagrined by this refusal, the more so because it was unexpected. People had whispered about Mr. Seaton Tuke's impecuniosity. He had been for some terms practically excluded from entertainments the prime object whereof was play, on the honourable ground that men disliked to win money of one who could not afford to lose. Yet, poor as he was, he evinced a stubborn disposition to stick to his four-legged treasure. Lord Montaigne professed himself fairly puzzled.

By degrees, however, in spite of the welcome influx of credit, the twenty-five pounds melted, and our friend had the ineffable pain of hypothecating his chronometer in order to pay the necessary fees for his examination.

Even this money was lost. He went into the Schools, hope that

'Native cheek, where facts were weak,
Would bear him in triumph through.'

Alas, however, that admirable quality did but display his ignorance which was so spherical that the grave examiners themselves barely check their smiles, whilst the listening undergraduates incontinently.

On the black evening when Mr. Purdue informed him that there was no testamur Mr. Seaton Tuke took counsel of himself, as every one does after a pluck, a sadder but a wiser man.

The upshot of his communications with his inner counsel was, that he wrote to Lord Montaigne, informing him that the stone would be again raffled, provided that fifty tickets of five each were subscribed before twelve A.M. on the following Saturday. The entire number of tickets to be sixty, whereof ten were subscribed by Mr. St. Quintin of New Inn Hall.

The bait took beautifully. Lord Montaigne bought up the tickets, and placed the remainder among his set. The raffle was held in Mr. St. Quintin's rooms—St. Quintin was fraternized with Mr. Seaton Tuke, and withal a gentleman who lived by his wits, with this result: Mr. St. Quintin became proprietor of the stone, but he resold her on the following day to her original owner for a sum of one hundred pounds.

There was so much of peculiarity in this sequence of events, that 'Tuke's mare' began to be a phrase in the University, used as equivalent to 'dead-sell;' and as a necessary consequence Mr. Seaton Tuke himself, feeling the social atmosphere too close, to suit his moral cuticle, went down for a term, with the resolution that, if reading, passing should Fate be propitious, and avoiding the University of Oxford.

To be concise, he did read, and actually came to sleep in his B.A. gown. Nevertheless, after so felicitous a start to a chequered career, he could not bring himself to desert his Mater. His finances permitted him to reside a short time, plunging into the hard business of life. His few creditors played no hostile intentions. Hence he settled down once more to a lotos-eating existence; and indeed, having no particular avocation, remained in Oxford for the whole of the Long Vacation.

Towards the end of that dreary blank Mr. St. Quintin began to read. The *Arcades ambo* embraced (metaphorically), and then, rode, played fives and tennis, and otherwise killed time and money. At last the necessities of either gentleman began to be felt heavily. Mr. St. Quintin was terribly dipped. Mr. Seaton Tuke was less so, but without a chance of pocketing any sum except by his labour. In the end these cronies laid their noddles together, with this intent:

Loadstone again was to be raffled, tickets being fixed at a low price, and the owner, in order to give confidence, agreeing to hold none. It was expected that, in the absence of the University, a sufficient sale would be effected to the leading citizens, many of whom have pluck sufficient to make them risk a small sum for the chance of a great return.

This venture proved but partially successful. About seventy pounds out of three hundred was subscribed. Notwithstanding, strange to say, although the mare would have fetched trouble that sum at Tattersall's, she was raffled.

The winner this time was Mr. St. Quintin's college servant, who afterwards confessed that, having had his ticket presented him gratis, he sold his chance to Mr. Seaton Tuke for ten shillings and a bottle of sherry.

After this Mr. Seaton Tuke disappeared. In the course of the following term he sold Loadstone to Lord Montaigne, who killed her on Shipton Barrow, as harsh critics said, by his infamous horsemanship. With the proceeds of her price Mr. Seaton Tuke went to Australia, where he probably is doing well, unless perchance the Antipodeans object to the marked originality of his talents for raising the wind. Mr. St. Quintin, after breaking his mother's heart, and cantering through the Bankruptcy Court, reformed his ways, and is now a popular preacher on the outlook for preferment.

Apropos of raffles, it may not be amiss to narrate one which came at a college we will term St. Blasius, for 'The Devil's Chair.'

The St. Blasius men prided themselves upon one distinctive quality, viz. wickedness; e.g. Juggins of St. Blasius, a youth on the full use of eight fingers and two thumbs, boasted loudly on festive occasion that there was no sin he had not committed during his brief span of existence.

'You never murdered anything more human than a partridge,' suggested, by way of objection, a mild Irishman.

Whereupon, with many and horrible imprecations, Juggins swore that he had once murdered a man in Paris. There being no evidence to the contrary, the comparatively sane Milesian felt himself silenced.

'You never committed forgery, Juggins,' remarked a slow man slyly, as if such an act on the part of this boastful sinner was quite improbable.

'Repeatedly,' answered Juggins, with cool effrontery. 'Ask the managers of the ——— Bank if there wasn't an awful row because I imitated the governor's signature so cleverly that they cashed my cheques across the counter.'

Here again evidence of a rebutting character being not forthcoming, the idle vaunt stood.

'I'll tell you what,' jerked out little Tom Tit, after every one had questioned Juggins on all the commandments in the Decalogue, 'there's one crime I'll bet you a pony Juggins won't own to.'

'Done with you, sir,' interposed Juggins savagely.

Mr. Tom Tit smiled mysteriously. The company present asked themselves whether, as there is a new colour invented every London season, it were possible, by dint of human ingenuity, to discover a new crime.

'Out with it!' cried Juggins disdainfully.

'*You never cheated at cards!*'

Juggins looked round the room uncomfortably. No. He could not exactly give chapter and verse for this offence against morality; in fact, he piqued himself on being above such a suspicion. To add to his confusion, Mr. Tom Tit began to titter, and presently the whole room was in roar.

'I'll pay,' he averred.

Whereupon the company roared ever so much louder.

Mr. Juggins may be taken as typifying the St. Blasius man of that period. His set were to a head no better and no worse. They were not fools. Quite the reverse. Rubble, the coach, declared of them that they could grind up more matter in a week than you steady reading man could grasp in a year. Perhaps Rubble was right, if you do but reduce his exaggeration to the level of reality. Brain-work apart, they were more scientifically *harum-scarum* than their neighbours, not only in action but in opinion.

Their chiefest creation was a club which bore the braggadocio, rather than blasphemous, name of 'Hell-fire.' Had they adopted the nomenclature of Tartarus or Erebus, the best of men would but have smiled; but by thus defying the Christianity of a Christian foundation they incurred a censure which was at least deserved. The custom of the club was at their feasts to leave a chair vacant at the head of the table for his satanic majesty—a custom rather superfluous, considering that there was wickedness among them enough without (to use a homely metaphor) carrying coals to Newcastle.

At last, one night when they were unusually boozy, report went that the dread spirit whose torments they scorned as visionary actually appeared and took his seat at the head of the table, while the wretches who had mocked his influence sat and shivered in their shoes. The proceedings of the society, like many other heroic have not been handed down with accuracy of detail; possibly

'*Quia carent vate sacro.*'

At the time we write, however, 'The Devil's Chair' had passed from a St. Blasius undergraduate into the possession of a St. Blasius scout, who, not valuing the rickety remains of a bygone supersti-

tion for more than its worth in an upholsterer's shop, was minded to sell it to some dealer outside the college walls. At a meeting, however, of undergraduates, it was resolved that so historical and interesting a piece of furniture ought not to be consigned to oblivion. A subscription would have been raised for its purchase, in order to present it to the college library; but the acting dean, a stern Ritualist, forbade that the rulers of the college should directly or indirectly tamper with demonology. Hence the simpler expedient of a raffle was proposed, and adopted *nem. contradic.*

As a point of honour, every member of the college not being a fellow put in for this strange lottery. Oxford throughout, as all will testify who have had an intimate acquaintance with it, is almost prismatic in its rapid change of colour. The college which is fast in the present year will probably exhibit an average piety four or five years hence, and *vice versa*. Hence it did so happen that the St. Blasius of the old roaring 'Hell-fire' set had changed into a St. Blasius of a dreamy ecclesiastical-sentimental sort of type, and that in consequence this *relic* of sin was regarded with peculiar horror, as though its very padding and timbers were somehow haunted.

The raffle therefore assumed the complexion of solemnity. Nine out of ten of the ticket-holders devoutly implored their patron saint that they might not win. To such an extent indeed had the notion of ill-luck attending this chair influenced the popular mind of ardent youth, that sundry personages who had taken tickets destroyed those same vouchers lest they should perchance win.

As the day for raffling approached, the excitement grew intense. A report got about that M—— of Oriel had asserted that the winner would be condemned to a century of purgatory. Indeed, an effort was made to induce the dons to interfere, but fruitlessly; the worthy head of St. Blasius—a confirmed Erastian—declaring that so long as the devil did not impinge upon his income, he was welcome to sit wherever he chose.

Imagine, therefore, the thrill of horror which shot through a hundred hearts when Mr. Thickness, the president of the junior common-room, announced that ticket No. 100 had won the 'prize.'

No. 100 was not forthcoming. In fact, as being behind the scenes, we may state that No. 100 had burnt his ticket in a fit of abject terror.

Under the circumstances, Mr. Thickness advised that the said 'prize' should be raffled a second time. The assembled undergraduates giving their adhesion to this course after some parley, the chair fell to the lot of one Junius Hardy, a youth of mark, intelligence, and pluck, whose belief was none the less strong in being limited by common sense.

'Poor Hardy!' sighed one kind friend. 'You will die within a year.'

'Burn it,' whispered another.

'Get M—— to exorcise it,' cried a third.

'Bosh!' exclaimed the winner. 'If I die, I am reverent enough to believe my death will not be the result of such blind accident. Nor shall I, to gratify a stupid superstitious feeling which dishonours my intelligence, destroy a useful addition to my rooms. Lastly, I don't require M——'s exorcism. I'll do it myself with Wills' Bristol bird's-eye.'

Hardy was right. He lived to be a limb of the law. He kept his warm seat as long as he had need for it; and subsequently sold it to a man of ecclesiastical proclivities, who, ignorant of its history, is happily not afraid to lounge therein. Sometimes, however, not being himself a smoker, the purchaser grumbles at the fumes of past pipes which still attach themselves to the old chair, and therefore threatens to have it re-covered. Should this contingency happen, any serious need of exorcism will be removed, inasmuch as, to use the phraseology of the old, and now, alas, forgotten, Eton grammar, the seat was the 'part affected.'

COMPTON READE, M.A.

'HER FIRST APPEARANCE'

From the south-western corner of Lincoln's-inn-fields a winding and confined court leads to Vere-street, Clare Market. Midway or in the passage there formerly existed Gibbon's Tennis-court—an establishment which after the Restoration, and for some three years, served as a playhouse; altogether distinct, be it remembered, from the far more famous Lincoln's-inn-fields Theatre, situate close by in Portugal-street, at the back of the College of Surgeons. Nevertheless the Vere-street Theatre, as it was called, can boast something in its history; at any rate, one event of singular dramatic importance renders it memorable. For on Saturday, the 8th of December 1660, the historians of the drama relate, it was the scene of the first appearance upon the English stage of the first English actress. The lady played Desdemona; and a certain Mr. Thomas Jordan, an actor and the author of various poetical pieces, provided for delivery upon the occasion a 'Prologue to introduce the first woman that came to it on the stage in the tragedy called the *Moor of Venice*.'

So far the story is clear enough. But was this Desdemona really the first English actress? Had there not been earlier change in the old custom prescribing that the heroines of the British drama should be personated by boys? It is certain that FRENCH actresses had appeared here so far back as 1629. Prynne, in his *Histrioeconomia*, published in 1633, writes: 'They have now their female players in Italy and other foreign parts, and Michaelmas 1629 they had French women-actors in a play personated at Blackfriars, to which there was great resort.' These ladies, however, it may be added, met with a very unfavourable reception. Prynne's denunciation of them was a matter of course. He had undertaken to show that stage plays of whatever kind were most 'pernicious corruptions,' and that the profession of 'play-poets' and stage-players, together with the penning, acting, and frequenting of stage-plays, were unlawful, infamous, and misbecoming Christians. He speaks of the 'women-actors' as 'monsters,' and applies most severe epithets to their histrionic efforts: 'impudent,' 'shameful,' 'unwomanish,' and 'beast-like.' Another critic, one Thomas Brande, in a private letter discovered by Mr. Payne Collier in the library of Lambeth Palace, had probably addressed to Laud while Bishop of London, writes of the 'just offence to all virtuous and well-disposed persons in this town given by the vagrant French players who had been expelled from their own country,' and adds: 'glad am I to say they were

hissed, hooted, and pippin-pelted' (pippin-pelted is a good phrase) 'from the stage, so as I do not think they will soon be ready to try the same again.' Mr. Brande was farther of opinion that the Master of the Revels should have been called to account for permitting such performances. Failing at Blackfriars, the French company subsequently appeared at the Fortune and Red-Bull Theatres, but with a similar result, insomuch that the Master of the Revels, Sir Henry Herbert, who had duly sanctioned their performance, records in his accounts that, 'in respect of their ill luck,' he had returned some portion of the fees they had paid him for permission to play.

Whether these French 'women-actors' failed because of their sex or because of their nationality cannot now be shown. They were the first actresses that had ever been seen in this country. But then they were not of English origin, and they appeared, of course, in a foreign drama. Still, of English actresses antecedent to the Desdemona of the Vere-street Theatre certain traces have been discovered. In Brome's comedy of the *Court Beggar*, acted at the Cockpit Theatre in 1632, one of the characters observed: 'If you have a short speech or two, the boy's a pretty actor, and his mother can play her part; *women-actors now grow in request.*' Was this an allusion merely to the French actresses that had been seen in London some few years before, or were English actresses referred to? Had these really appeared, if not at the public theatres, why, then at more private dramatic entertainments? Upon such points doubt must still prevail. It seems certain, however, that a Mrs. Coleman had presented herself upon the stage in 1656, playing a part in Sir William Davenant's tragedy of the *Siege of Rhodes*—a work produced somehow in evasion of the puritanical ordinance of 1647, which closed the theatres and forbad dramatic exhibitions of every kind. For the *Siege of Rhodes*, although it consisted in a great measure of songs with recitative, explained or illustrated by painted scenery, did not differ much from an ordinary play. Ianthe, the heroine, was personated by Mrs. Coleman, whose share in the performance was confined to the delivery of recitative. Ten years later the lady was entertained at his house by Mr. Pepys, who speaks in high terms both of her musical abilities and of herself, pronouncing her voice 'decayed as to strength, but mighty sweet, though soft, and a pleasant jolly woman, and in mighty good humour.'

If this Mrs. Coleman may be classed rather as a singer than an actress, and if we may view Davenant's *Siege of Rhodes* more as a musical entertainment than as a regular play, then no doubt the claim of the Desdemona of Clare Market to be, as Mr. Thomas Jordan described her, 'the first woman that came to act on the stage,' is much improved. And here we may say something more relative to the Vere-street Theatre. It was first opened in the month of November 1660; Thomas Killigrew, its manager, and one of the

rooms of the king's bedchamber, having received his patent in the previous August, when a similar favour was accorded to Sir William Davenant, who during Charles I.'s reign had been possessed of letters-patent. King Charles II., taking it into his 'princely consideration' that it was not necessary to suppress the use of theatres, but that if the evil and scandal in the plays then acted were taken away, they might serve 'as innocent and harmless divertisement' for many of his subjects, and having experience of the art and skill of his rusty and well-beloved Thomas Killigrew and William Davenant, granted them full power to elect two companies of players, and to purchase, build, and erect, or hire, two houses or theatres, with all convenient rooms and other necessities thereunto appertaining, for the representation of tragedies, comedies, plays, operas, and all other entertainments of that nature. The managers were also authorised to fix such rates of admission as were customary or reasonable 'in regard of the great expenses of scenes, music, and such new decorations as have not been formerly used;' with full power 'to make such allowances out of that which they shall so receive to the actors and other persons employed in the same representations, in both houses respectively, as they shall think fit.' For these patents their grants were afterwards substituted, Davenant receiving his new letters on the 15th January, and Killigrew *his* on the 25th April 1662. The new grants did not differ much from the old ones, except that the powers vested in the patentees were more fully declared. No other companies but those of the two patentees were to be permitted to perform within the cities of London and Westminster; all others were to be silenced and suppressed. Killigrew's actors were styled the 'Company of his Majesty and his Royal Consort;' Davenant's the 'Servants of his Majesty's dearly-beloved brother James, Duke of York.' The better to preserve 'amity and correspondence' between the two theatres, no actor was to be allowed to quit one company for the other without the consent of his manager being first obtained. And forasmuch as many plays formerly acted contained objectionable matter, and the women's parts therein being acted by men in the habits of women, gave offence to some, the managers were farther enjoined to act no plays 'containing any passages offensive to piety and good manners, until they had first directed and purged the same;' and permission was given that all the women's parts to be acted by either of the companies for the time to come might be performed by women, so that recreations which, by reason of the abuses aforesaid, were scandalous and offensive, might by such reformation be esteemed not only harmless sights, but useful and instructive representations of human life to which of 'our good subjects' as should resort to see the same.

These patents proved a cause of numberless dissensions in future years. Practically they reduced the London theatres to two. Before

the Civil War there had been six: the Blackfriars and the Globe belonging to the same company, called the King's Servants; the Cockpit or Phoenix in Drury-lane, the actors of which were called the Queen's Servants; a theatre in Salisbury-court, Fleet-street, occupied by the Prince's Servants; and the Fortune in Golden-lane, and the Red Bull in St. John-street, Clerkenwell—establishments for the lower class, 'mostly frequented by citizens and the meaner sort of people.' Earlier Elizabethan theatres, the Swan, the Rose, and the Hope, seem to have closed their career some time in the reign of James I.

The introduction of actresses upon the English stage has usually been credited to Sir William Davenant, whose theatre, however, did not open until more than six months after the performance of *Othello*, with an actress in the part of Desdemona, at Killigrew's establishment in Vere-street. 'Went to Sir William Davenant's opera,' records Pepys on the 2d July 1661, 'this being the fourth day it hath begun, and the first that I have seen it.' Although regular tragedies and comedies were acted there, Pepys constantly speaks of Davenant's theatre as the *opera*, the manager having produced various musical pieces before the Restoration. Of the memorable performance of *Othello* in Vere-street on the 10th December 1660, Pepys makes no mention. He duly chronicles, however, a visit to Killigrew's theatre on the following 3d January, when he saw the comedy of the *Beggar's Bush* performed; 'it being very well done, and was the first time that ever I saw women come upon the stage. He had seen the same play in the previous November, when it was represented by male performers only. But even after the introduction of actresses the heroines of the stage were still occasionally impersonated by men. Thus in January 1661 Pepys saw Kynaston appear in the *Silent Woman*, and pronounced the young actor 'the prettiest woman in the whole house.' As Cibber states, the stage 'could not be so suddenly supplied with women but that there was still a necessity to put the handsomest young men into petticoats.'

Strange to say, the name of the actress who played Desdemona under Killigrew's management in 1660 has not been discovered. Who, then, was the first English actress, assuming that she was the Desdemona of the Vere-street Theatre? She must be looked for in Killigrew's company. His 'leading lady' was Mrs. Ann Marshall, of whom Pepys makes frequent mention, who is known to have obtained distinction alike in tragedy and in comedy, and to have personated such characters as the heroine of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Scornful Lady*, Roxana in *Alexander the Great*, Calphurnia in *Julius Cæsar*, Evadne in the *Maid's Tragedy*, and so on; there is no record, however, of her having appeared in the part of Desdemona. Indeed, this part is not invariably assumed by 'leading ladies'; it has occasionally devolved upon the *seconda donna* of the company. And

in a representation of *Othello* on the 6th February 1669, at the Theatre Royal in Drury-lane (to which establishment Killigrew and his troop had removed from Vere-street in April 1669), it is certain, on the evidence of Downes's *Roscius Anglicanus*, that a Mrs. Hughes played the part of Desdemona to the Othello of Burt, the Iago of Mobum, and the Cassio of Hart. Now was this Mrs. Hughes, who had been a member of Killigrew's company from the first, the Desdemona on whose behalf, nine years before, Mr. Thomas Jordan wrote his apologetic prologue? It seems not unlikely. At the same time it must be stated that there are other claimants to the distinction. Tradition long pointed to Mrs. Betterton, the wife of the famous tragedian, as the first woman that ever appeared on the English stage. She was originally known as Mrs. Saunderson—the title of *Mistress* being applied alike to maidens and matrons at the period of the Restoration—and married her illustrious husband about the year 1663. She was one of four principal actresses whom Sir William Davenant lodged at his own house, and she appeared with great success as Ianthe upon the opening of his theatre with the *Siege of Rhodes*. Pepys, indeed, repeatedly refers to her by her dramatic name of Ianthe. Has the belief that she was the first actress arisen from confusing her assumption of Ianthe with the performance of the same part by Mrs. Coleman in 1656, a fact of which mention has already been made? Otherwise it is hardly credible that she, one of Davenant's actresses, had been previously attached to Killigrew's company, and had in such wise chanced to play Desdemona in Vere-street. There is no evidence of this whatever, nor can it be discovered that she appeared as Desdemona at any period of her career. The Vere-street Desdemona, we repeat, must be looked for in Killigrew's company, which commenced operations more than half a year before the rival theatre. It is true that some time before the opening of this theatre Davenant had been the responsible manager in regard to certain performances at the Blackfriars Theatre and elsewhere; but there is no reason to suppose that actresses took part in these entertainments; it is known, indeed, that the favourite characters in the plays exhibited were sustained by the young actors of the company—Kynaston, James Nokes, Angel, and William Betterton. Altogether, Mrs. Betterton's title to honour as the first English actress seems defective; and as much may be said of the pretensions of another actress, Mrs. Norris, although she has met with support from Tom Davies in his *Dramatic Miscellanies*, and from Curl in his *History of the Stage*, a very unworthy production. Mrs. Norris was an actress of small note attached to Davenant's company; she was the mother of Henry Norris, a popular comedian, surnamed 'Jubilee Dicky,' from his performance of the part of Dicky in Farquhar's *Constant Couple*. Chetwood correctly describes her as 'ONE of the first women that came on the stage as an actress.' To her, as to

Mrs. Betterton, the objection applies, that she was a member of Davenant's company—not of Killigrew's—and therefore couldn't have appeared in Vere-street. Moreover, she never attained such a position in her profession as would have entitled her to assume a part of the importance of Desdemona.

On the whole, the case of Mrs. Hughes seems to have the support of more probabilities than any other. But even if it is to be accepted as a fact that she was in truth the first actress, there the matter remains. Very little is known of the lady. She lived in a world which kept scarcely any count of its proceedings—which left no records behind to be used as evidence either for or against it. She was in her time the subject of talk enough, very likely; was admired for her beauty, possibly for her talents too; but hardly a written scrap concerning her has come down to us. The ordinary historian of the time, impressed with a sense of the dignity of his task, did not concern himself with the players, and rated as insignificant and unworthy of his notice such matters as the pursuits, pastimes, tastes, manners, and customs of the people. We know more of the method of English life in Charles II.'s time from the diarist Pepys than from all the writers of history put together. Unfortunately, concerning Mrs. Hughes even Pepys is silent. It is known that in addition to the character of Desdemona, which she certainly sustained in February 1669 at any rate, she also appeared as Panurion in Fletcher's *Island Princess*, and as Theodosia in Dryden's comedy of *An Evening's Love, or the Monk Astrologer*, to the Jacyntha of Nell Gwynne; there is scarcely a record of her assumption of any other part, unless she be the same Mrs. Hughes who impersonated Mrs. Monylove in a comedy called *Tom Essence*, produced at the Dorset-garden Theatre in 1676. But it is believed that she quitted or was taken from her profession—was 'crept the stage,' to employ old Downes's phrase—at an earlier date. The famous Prince Rupert of the Rhine was her lover. He bought for her, at a cost of 20,000*l.*, the once-magnificent seat of Sir Nicholas Crispe near Hammersmith, which afterwards became the residence of the Margrave of Brandenburg; and at a later date the retreat of Queen Caroline, the wife of George IV. Ruperta, the daughter of Mrs. Hughes, was married to Lieutenant-General Howe, and, surviving her husband many years, died at Somerset House about 1740. In the Memoirs of Count Grammont mention is found of Prince Rupert's passion for the actress. She is stated to have 'brought down and greatly subdued his natural fierceness.' She is described as an impertinent gipsy, and accused of pride, in that she conducted herself, all things considered, unselfishly, and even with some dignity. The King is said to have been 'greatly pleased with this event'—he was probably amused at it; Charles II. was very willing at all times to be amused—'for which great rejoicings' (why rejoicings?) 'were

made at Tunbridge ; but nobody was bold enough to make it the subject of satire, though the same constraint was not observed with other ridiculous personages.' Upon the Prince the effect of his love seems to have been marked enough. 'From this time adieu alembics, crucibles, furnaces, and all the black furniture of the forges ; a complete farewell to all mathematical instruments and chemical speculations ; sweet powder and essences were now the only ingredients that occupied any share of his attention.' Farther of Mrs. Hughes there is nothing to relate, with the exception of the use made of her name by the unseemly and unsavoury Tom Brown in his *Letters from the Dead to the Living*. Mrs. Hughes and Nell Gwynne are supposed to address letters to each other, exchanging reproaches in regard to the impropriety of their manner of life. Nell Gwynne accuses her correspondent of squandering her money and of gaming. 'I am ashamed to think that a woman who had wit enough to tickle a Prince out of so fine an estate should at last prove such a fool as to be bubbled of it by a little spotted ivory and painted paper.' 'Peg Hughes,' as she is called, replies, congratulating herself upon her generosity, treating the loss of her estate as 'the only piece of carelessness I ever committed worth my boast,' and charging 'Madam Gwynne' with vulgar avarice and the love of 'lucre of base coin.' We can glean nothing more of the story of Mrs. Hughes.

It is uncertain indeed in what degree the advent of the first actress affected her audience ; whether the novelty of the proceeding gratified or shocked them the more. It was really a startling innovation—a wonderful improvement as it seems to us ; yet assuredly there were numerous conservative playgoers who held fast to the old ways of the theatre, and approved 'boy-actresses'—not needing such aids to illusion as the personation of women by women, but rather objecting thereto, for the same reason that they deprecated the introduction of scenery, because of appeal and stimulus to the imagination of the audience becoming in such wise greatly and perilously reduced. Then of course there were staid and sober folk who judged the profession of the stage to be most ill-suited for women. And certainly this view of the matter was much confirmed by the conduct of our earlier actresses, which was indeed open to the gravest reproach. From Mr. Jordan's prologue may be gathered some notion of the situation of the spectators on the night, or rather the afternoon, of December 8th, 1660. The theatre was probably but a poor-looking structure, hastily put together in the tennis-court to serve the purpose of the manager for a time merely. Seven years later, Tom Killigrew, talking to Mr. Pepys, boasted that the stage was then 'by his pains a thousand times better and more glorious than ever heretofore. Now wax candles, and many of them ; then not above 3 lbs. of tallow—now all things civil, no rudeness anywhere ; then as in a bear garden ; then two or three fiddlers—now nine or ten of the best ; then nothing

but rushes on the ground, and everything else mean—now all otherwise.' The manager possibly had in his mind during this retrospect the condition of the Vere-street Theatre while under his management. The audience possessed an unruly element. Prentices and servants filled the gallery; there were citizens and tradesmen in the pit, with yet a contingent of spruce gallants and scented fops, who combed their wigs during the pauses in the performance, took snuff, ogled the ladies in the boxes, and bantered the orange-girls. The prologue begins :

' I come, unknown to any of the rest,
To tell the news : I saw the lady drest—
The woman plays to-day ; mistake me not,
No man in gown or page in petticoat.

* * * * *
'Tis possible a virtuous woman may
Abhor all sorts of looseness and yet play ;
Play on the stage—where all eyes are upon her :
Shall we count that a crime France counts an honour ?
In other kingdoms husbands safely trust 'em.
The difference lies only in the custom.'

The gentlemen sitting in that 'Star-chamber of the house, the pit,' were then besought to think respectfully and modestly of the actress, and not to run 'to give her visits when the play is done.' We have then a picture of the male performers of female characters :

' But to the point : in this reforming age
We have intent to civilise the stage.
Our women are defective, and so sized
You'd think they were some of the guard disguised ;
For, to speak truth, men act, that are between
Forty and fifty, wenchies of fifteen ;
With bone so large and nerve so incompliant,
When you call Desdemona, *enter giant*.'

The prologue concludes with a promise, which certainly was not kept, that the drama should be purged of all offensive matter :

' And when we've put all things in this fair way,
Barebones himself may come to see a play.'

In the epilogue the spectators were asked, 'How do you like her?'—especial appeal being made to those among the audience of the gentler sex :

' But, ladies, what think you ? For if you tax
Her freedom with dishonour to your sex,
She means to act no more, and this shall be
No other play but her own tragedy,
She will submit to none but your commands,
And take commission only from your hands.'

The ladies, no doubt, applauded sufficiently, and 'woman-actors' from that time forward became more and more secure of

in the theatre. At the same time it would seem that there were in the minds of many a certain prejudice against them, and some apprehension concerning the reception they might obtain in the audience often occupied the managers. A prologue to the second part of Davenant's *Siege of Rhodes*, acted in April 1662, demonstrates that the matter had still to be dealt with cautiously. Indulgence is besought for the bashful fears of the actresses, and their looking from the judgment and observation of the wits and critics much dwelt upon.

It is worthy of note that the leading actors who took part in the representation of *Othello* at the Vere-street Theatre had all in early life been apprentices to older players, and accustomed to personate heroines of the stage. Thus Burt, the Othello of the cast, had acted as a boy under the actors Shanke and Beeston at the Blackfriars and Cockpit Theatres respectively. Mohun, the Iago, had been his playfellow at this time; so that when Burt appeared as Desdemona in Shirley's tragedy of *Love's Cruelty*, Mohun represented Montano in the same work. During the Civil War Mohun had borne his sword for the King, acquiring the rank of major, and acting himself as a soldier with much distinction. He was celebrated by Lord Rochester as the Æsopus of the stage; Nat Lee delighted in his acting, exclaiming, 'O Mohun, Mohun, thou little man with much mettle, if I should write a hundred plays, I'd write one for thy teeth!' and King Charles ventured to pun upon his name as badly as even a king might when he said of some representation, 'Mohun pronounce Moon) shone like the sun; Hart like the moon!' Charles Hart, the Cassio of the Vere-street company, could boast descent from Shakespeare's sister Joan, and describe himself as the poet's great-nephew. He, too, fought for the King in the great Civil War, rising as a lieutenant of horse under Sir Thomas Dallison in Prince Rupert's regiment. He had been apprenticed to Robinson the actor, and had played women's parts at the Blackfriars Theatre, winning great renown by his performance of the Duchess in Shirley's tragedy *The Cardinal*. As an actor Hart won extraordinary admiration; he soon took the lead of Burt, and from his physical gifts and graces was enabled even to surpass Mohun in popularity. He introduced William Gwynne to the stage, and became one of the sharers in the management and profits of the theatrical company to which he was attached.

There was soon an ample supply of actresses, and a decline altogether in the demand for boy-performers of female characters. There was an absolute end, indeed, of that industry; the established actors had no more apprentices, now to serve as their footboys and pages, and now as heroines of tragedy and comedy. A modern playgoer will have a difficulty in believing that these had ever any real existence, sharing Charles Lamb's amazement at a boy-Juliet, a boy-

Desdemona, a boy-Ophelia. There must have been much skill among the players; much simple good faith, contentment, and willingness to connive at theatrical illusion on the part of the audience. It must have been hard to tolerate a heroine with too obvious a beard, or of very perceptible masculine breadth of shoulders, length of limb, and freedom of gait. Let us note in conclusion that there is clearly a 'boy-actress' among the players welcomed by Hamlet to Elsinore, although the modern stage has rarely taken note of the fact. The player-queen, when not robed for performance in the tragedy of the 'Mousetrap,' should wear a boy's dress. 'What, my young lady and mistress!' says Hamlet jestingly to the youthful apprentice; and he adds allusion to the boy's increase of stature: 'By'r lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last by the altitude of a *chopine*!'—in other words, 'How the boy has grown!'—a *chopine* being a shoe with a heel of inordinate height. And then comes reference to that change of voice from alto to bass which attends advance from boyhood to adolescence.

DUTTON COOL.

APRIL IN AUVERGNE

train rushes on, still southward. By this time the kilomètres Paris are counted in hundreds; the wide Seine has been quitted many hours; the wider Loire has appeared with its trees and fields, and after flowing for many miles by the side of the railway, a great relief of the eyes of the travellers, tired of the endless plains, has also been left behind. The train runs on. Suddenly, at one of the least of the roadside stations, a lengthy range of hills or mountains extends itself along the southern horizon before the eyes, that, looking again, see that there is too much steadiness in that long shadowy outline for a mere cloud-formation. At the long champaign which stretches from the poplars of Picardy the vineyards of the Loire is relieved by the distant prospect of mountains of Auvergne.

Auvergne! Something in the name draws one: the thought of a new scene—the idea of huge green hills, occupying a secluded and romantic region—the dream of a happy pastoral life, spent far from the cities of men, in its innocence requiring no civilisation, and with simplicity no commerce. Romance especially attaches itself to the South of France; Provence and Languedoc are the lands of troubadours. Castles, ladies fair, song, and chivalry come into the minds with the names of these countries; but then, unfortunately, the countries themselves are flat, sandy, and uninteresting. Not so Auvergne; Auvergne is a land of mountains, and wherever there are mountains there is at least variety, and almost always beauty, of scenery. There are both in Auvergne; and this is the reason why, in the district of wide France, properly speaking, for which beauty of scenery may be absolutely claimed.

Even in the South of France—in those districts which are not far from the latitude of Turin—the April of last year was hardly the best time during the early part of it, a month of the spring. The fertile plain of La Limagne, with its bare vine-poles and unharvested fields, flowerless gardens and leafless grottoes, had not—glorious nevertheless—its summer glory; the unfathomable blue of the skies of the South was still hidden from the longing eyes by sweeping clouds, and, on the higher tracts, by drifting snow; the latticed houses, built coolly for an Italian climate, were cheerless and cold, to us tourists from England, during this wet weather of winter. But winter is the time for mountains, and those tremendous Alpine summits upon which it is winter; they are dwarfed by summer, and despoiled in its clear

strong light of those misty and stormy effects which bestow upon them their terror and their charm.

So to us English tourists the great cone of the Puy de Dôme rose above its surrounding cones and craters (the Auvergnat mountains are all volcanic), and overlooked the extent of the Limagnac plain, the more impressively because it still wore its mantle of snow. It was mantled from head to base with snow, and with vapour also when I and two others climbed it, without a guide; and after a long ascent of two hours and a half from Royat, a village of narrow streets that straggles upwards along one of the highest and fairest of the Auvergnat valleys, we waded rather than climbed up the steep slope of the huge cone of the great extinct volcano, the upper portion of our persons in the cloud, the lower, as high as the waist sometimes in the snow. Not that upon a clear and soft day of summer there would be any real difficulty, much less danger, in ascending the Puy de Dôme; but it is one thing to follow the track under such circumstances, and another to do so when it is hidden by heaped snow more or less, at every step, and all one sees of the mountain one climbing is a glimpse now and then of a rock or a precipice so close at hand, but as vaguely as a vision, whenever the vapour that wraps you and the mountain grows for a moment thinner.

From the summit of this, the most celebrated, though not the highest, hill of France, I, having gained it under these disadvantages, saw nothing. The rolling vapour encompassed me still, through which now and then the sun broke overhead, but immediately was again hidden. There was no resource but to come down again; fifteen hundred feet of steep, snow-covered, cloud-hidden slopes must be descended before the prospect was to be seen which stretches and swells below the Puy de Dôme: the rest of the volcanic cones in this range, the hills—here peaked, there wooded—the valleys, and farther away the great Limagnac champaign, with its towns and vineyards, and blue distances and remote hill-ranges, surging and sweeping around and about it—a great divine picture upon any clear day, calm as death, wide as a world, rich and fair as the summer of the South, that loves to cover it with its long lingering blue.

The Puy de Dôme owes part of its celebrity to itself—to its singular volcanic formations—and part to its neighbourhood to Clermont, the Auvergnat capital, which lies near its base—a city with narrow streets, like those of most of these southern towns. It clusters round an eminence, upon which stands its cathedral, whose tapering pillared interior I was glad to see thronged upon Easter Sunday. The cross holds its own, even in France, still. On the week-day Clermont is industrious; its horse-fairs and cattle-markets keep the game of life going. Somewhat inconsistently built, it has a square and several passable streets; it is dirty, but every other town and village in Auvergne, to the best of the writer's be-

Artier. In one of the dirtiest of these places, the rude character of the villagers displayed itself. Losing my way, I was surrounded by a jibing crowd, who shouted loudly and gesticulated much, causing me some apprehension, till a gentleman, who suggested to me rather uncomfortably the idea of one of Salvator's bandits, took me under his care, and set me right, either for charity or a consideration. In another village—the town, namely, of Champi—I and my party were denounced by an orator, who was energetic rather than eloquent, as Prussians, and a combat of two occurred between our enemy and a friend; but on the whole we were amicably received: England is popular in France.

Unsatisfactory, however, as are the villages of Auvergne, the beer in the auberges is drinkable, being beer, and not, as in English alehouses, poison. The aubergistes vary in the matter of politeness and attention; but at the hotels everything may be relied upon, though there is difficulty in procuring horses, upon which, according to Murray, the country is most conveniently traversed. The ladies of our party careered unpretentiously through Auvergne in a salt-cart, drawn by an inelegant but robust quadruped, and directed by a charioteer describable by the same epithets, and of whom it may farther be observed that he had an obtrusive partiality for garlic. The route was circuitous, from the circumstance that when Clermont and its neighbourhood had been examined, Mont d'Or, the other point d'appui of Auvergne, was found to be inaccessible, by reason of the snow, from the first roads we attempted. By the compulsory circuit, however, which we performed, we reaped the advantage of seeing more of the interior of the country, and of that ruder Auvergnat life which would usually fail to fall under the notice of the few tourists who deign to take note of Auvergne. Not many care to see more of it than the outline of its hills as they pass them, journeying southward towards the towns of Southern France, or the mountains of Northern Spain. These interior tracts of the province are, indeed, hardly worthy of investigation; there is a good deal of barren rugged moorland, which reminds one of Skye, and their male inhabitants, with their dark faces and matted hair, and generally unkempt appearance, bring to mind the rude kelp-gathering Hebrideans. There is a lake or two which detain the eye, if viewed from the heights; there is some scenery, which is like that of Derbyshire—one grand long gorge especially, with enormous hanging rocks, and a river, on the road between Beste and Issoire, which suggests Dovedale seen through a magnifying-glass. The last-mentioned town, Issoire, by the way, is the best, notwithstanding its gaudy cathedral, which I have seen in Auvergne. The long straight avenue, flanked by aspens, by which it is approached; the levels luxuriantly green on either side; the sunny hills at due distance, long and low, and pillaring a wide expanse of sky for the broad fair interval be-

tween them—are in the style of the South. Here is the Italian touch more clearly than anywhere else in Auvergne, except perhaps where the sunlight smiles down the long dreamy valley of Royat.

But I have reached Issoire, the last place I saw, too soon. Mont d'Or des Bains, the *pièce de résistance* of Auvergne, remains to be described. So even does one point of the scenery that surrounds Clermont. Leave that chattering, chaffering capital, with its card players and horse-dealers, trust yourself to a cart of the country and its blue-bloused driver, be driven up reach after reach of mountain road, getting grander views at every terrace of the great Limmagrac plain, which, with its many mountain ranges, is broad enough to make them seem to rise only here and there amongst its spaces that look like one wide garden; still ascending, you will arrive at length at possibly the highest auberge in the country. Hence you may climb, in two sharp twists, the Puy de Pavioux, the most perfect of the Auvergnat volcanoes, though not the highest, as the edge of the great crater which forms its summit, hollowed out as clearly and smoothly as a cup, rises to no greater elevation than 4000 feet from the sea-level. I brought away a few of the volcanic stones, which, lying in a heap at the bottom of this exquisitely-fashioned crater, attest the fury of fire which once raged over these mountains, that have been nevertheless as quiet as death or as despair throughout the memories of the generations.

From the Puy de Pavioux or from the Puy de Dôme may be seen, when the day is clearer than upon the occasion of my own ascent, a lengthy mountain chain, with protracted ridges, sharp juts of rock, keen air-piercing points, and slopes of a magnitude surpassing even those of this dome-crowned range of extinct volcanoes. This mightier mountain-line, crowned in April from head to base with snow, contains the Pic de Saucy, the culminating point of France. Upwards of 6000 feet in height altogether, only half of that elevation remains to be climbed from the town of Mont d'Or des Bains, which may, I suppose, be designated a fashionable watering-place in the summer season. The surprise of the inhabitants was marked when we informed them that we proposed to march over the snow on foot to the summit of Saucy; the feeling ran to astonishment when the feat was achieved—this time, however, with a guide—not only by the male, but by one of the female members of our party. When the latter's exploit was bruited at Besse, her breakfast was witnessed by some of the inhabitants, who amused themselves by stolidly flattening their noses against the various windows of the *salle-à-manger*, and contemplating 'mademoiselle' to do them justice, with a generous admiration. And, indeed, ascent was arduous, though it had not the touch of distinguished that of the Puy de Dôme, inasmuch as the snow was clear and the snow hard enough to be shallow for

It is said that from the summit (which is pyramidal in form and somewhat steep) of the Pic de Saucy may be descried the Alps. I did not see them, though the weather was clear. The most striking range in sight was that of the Cantal, with its long snow-finkled crest, severed from the supporting slopes by a thin drift of trailing clouds; it looked as wild as it is, in its situation amid a more inaccessible part of the country. As a rule, the best views of mountains are not obtained from mountains' summits; but the weird look of the Cantal peaks, with their faint snow and fainter red, seen far in the distance from the top of Saucy, is set in my memory more firmly, somehow, than anything else that it retains of Auvergnat scenery—even than the valley of the Mont d'Or, which a member of our party indignantly affirmed against another to be finer than any piece of scenery he had seen in Switzerland. And, indeed, the valley in question has pretensions that might have justified the preference: deep and ample, it stretches its pines and rocks and green plateaus, its solemn aspects and largely-wooded spaces, on the one side, to a distant open country, that in cloudy weather takes a blue colour, and seems like a sea beyond the woods, which float low in this lofty valley; on the other, to the rugged bases of Saucy and the strange steep (which one of our party ascended) of the Capuchin. Such is the famous mountain-enclosed valley of the Mont d'Or—the wildest and grandest feature of scenery which France displays. There is nothing in it of the polished beauty and grace, of the exquisite colour-modulations, which distinguish Killarney and the English Lake district; but, without being exactly savage, it is composed upon a scale of grandeur, and has a noble beauty of its own, which one could hardly expect as one approaches over a singularly barren region, its enclosing group of mountains split into two divisions, either of which would be, without the other, the highest mountain-group of France.

Mont d'Or, by the way, is not the only town of the district which has baths and a season. The waters of St. Nectaire are affirmed to be useful, and especially so in cases of paralysis and hysteria, and, like those of Mont d'Or, they spring in the midst of mountains. The hotel at St. Nectaire is overhung by peaks, and there is no town, as there is in the valley of Mont d'Or, for a town.

It is the habit of such travellers through a country as take notes to print them to acquire an immense, not to say an oppressive, knowledge of the region in question—to exhibit even a knowledge of considerably greater, or at least wider, than that possessed by the inhabitants themselves, and to dress it up, too, for inspection. I am therefore perfectly aware that before presuming to write about Auvergne I ought to have made myself acquainted with the name of every peak amid its mountains, with the subject of every picture in its archives, with every legend that ever was told in its auberges, with

everything that anybody of any consequence said or did in the country at any time since the volcanoes were burnt out. I advance a theory in regard to the period of the extinction of the volcanoes. I should give a short history of the persecution which the Protestants of France to their fastnesses in the long level of the Cevennes mountains. It is my business to give information on the subject of Latour d'Auvergne, the first grenadier of the 100th of the philanthropical and heretical Comte de Montlosier, the luxury-loving Marguerite de Valois, imprisoned in this savage region of la belle France. I ought to give some account of Auvergnat patois, and even to translate some Auvergnat. Well, if I were writing a book instead of a magazine article I might have spent a year in Auvergne instead of a fortnight. I might have told the reader everything that there is to be told about Auvergne, to show him, so to speak, every pebble of lava that lies in the mountain craters. As it is, however, I have given merely a few facts without the embellishment of excerpts from other books; and I must farther confess that two of the attractions of Auvergne, the rocky towns of Le Puy and of Thiers, have not been seen by me at all. Nevertheless, from what one has heard of those towns, especially the latter, may be commended (in the absence of any note in Auvergne the hotel accommodation is ample for the tourist. The individual in question was not encountered anywhere in the country. The season was, indeed, early, but I have little doubt that he was to be found in the corresponding districts of our own islands; was to be met, peradventure, in the 'Cader' on the day on which we were forcing our way up the lonely snowy Puy de Dôme. The knapsack is rare, I should say, in Auvergne throughout the summer; the French do not use it much, but the English might import it. The countenance is disputably up to the mark—unlike some others, to wit, the Cornish, which have been foisted upon the pedestrian world—and a few pounds would amply cover the expense of a fortnight from London. As for the inhabitants, I have pretty well said of them; some are inclined to be predatory, but I think the peaceful spirit; in the rural districts they are patriotic, but I do not have a liking for les Anglaises. One of our party, from long experience, estimated the Auvergnats greatly below the intelligence of the northern parts of France, both mentally and morally, being an advanced thinker of the school of the late Mr. Mill, he was not competent to form a judgment on the former than on the latter, and it would be difficult to see anything in the Auvergnats that fairly called for exceptional disapproval—no symptoms of degradation correspondent to the unfortunate physical degeneration of the goitre—in these mountaineers. They are dirty, many of them, certainly, and I observed one of them beating his wife, and

resisted by that female; and I myself experienced a somewhat rude treatment, as I have recorded, in one of the Auvergnat villages. But there was little—though some—attempt at extortion; the hotel executives were obliging and efficient always. The inhabitants of the villages through which we passed—and we were a sight to see with our primitive vehicle—stared at us in a manner that was modified by more politeness than would be exhibited towards a similar *cortège* say in a Lancashire town. The auvergistes gave us what we wanted, and did not grumble at us anywhere. England, indeed, is a name that sounds pleasantly in Auvergnat ears, on account of our reception of the Imperial family; for the Auvergnats, politically, fix their hopes upon 'le petit Napoléon,' the lad at Woolwich.

What is the reason that defeat as well as victory endears a Bonaparte to France? One gets to believe that if one of their family were, while reigning, to decapitate his subjects *en masse*, the heads, like that of Orpheus under like circumstance, would affectionately vociferate the beloved name still.

At least it seems that this would be done in Auvergne. And yet, now that the Bonapartes are exiled from the battered Tuileries, there is peace in Auvergne, and apparently happiness. The Auvergnat Tityrus drives his uncomfortably-yoked bullocks in his cart, or, tandem-wise, afield with his plough, in security. The peasant proprietor seems, too, to have it all his own way; except in the towns, no one inhabits Auvergne who is above the rank of a farmer. There are no châteaux; no trace or sign of the rural aristocracy, whose well-appointed horses and vehicles give an appearance of style and comfort to the country roads of England. Only once in Auvergne we met what might be termed a genteel turn-out upon the road. All over France, of course, we perceive the symptoms of peasant proprietorship; here, I suppose, this class of owner is in exclusive possession. It is a mode of occupancy that does not result in the improvement of the outward aspect of the country, nor to its progress in any way. Would there be any progress anywhere where farmers were in power? Auvergne on the whole, then, is magnant; there may seem to be some slight movements in religion. In mountainous districts, somehow, minds are usually the more affected by these impressions, and a most striking spectacle presented itself to us on Easter Monday—a long procession. It was winding in endless file, with banners upon which the blessed Virgin Mary was depicted, down one of the roads of these mountains of the French reformers. There seems, however, to be a lack of religious means throughout the rural districts; you meet very few priests, and see very few churches; at least one grew unconsciously impressed with this idea, and unconscious impressions are well worth the noting. There is a Protestant church at Clermont; but Auvergne retains little sign of the days when its mountains were to

the Huguenots what those of Scotland were to the Covenanters. But religious action and reaction have their times.

When we left Auvergne it was April still. Practically, the unusual lateness of the spring last year being considered, it was March; nevertheless, during a fortnight of cold hard weather we had more than one walk under a sweltering southern sun. A few weeks hence, and the sun of the South will be royal in his favourite skies; the soft blue of the Auvergnat heaven will be hung, windless and cloudless, over hills that have forgotten the snow, and flowers that have remembered the plains. All glorious in the golden weather, the grand *champaign*—which the Roman writer Sidonius declared to be so fair, you could not leave it—will bloom with a hundred gardens round towns and under towers; and time will roll on in splendour, with glowing days and gleaming nights, over the vine-valleys of Auvergne; its masses of snow will have melted from the great cone of the Puy de Dôme; and the snow mantle which fell even to the feet of Saucy, the king of the French mountains, will have been withdrawn: green to their very summits, these giants will lift their stature into the permanent blue of the summer.

And tourists will be numerous. The long tables of the *salle-mangers* will be loud with roars of garrulous French diners; the baths of St. Nectaire and Mont d'Or will be in requisition; the lossors of *voitures* in Clermont will get their goods' worth, and very likely, some of them, something besides. (Murray affirms that it is best to travel through Auvergne upon horseback. It may be—*for* Cæsar.)

Meantime, we who essayed the difficulties of this mountain district in less seasonable weather, and had the country, in the spring of the year, to ourselves, remember it. Nor shall we easily suffer to fade from our memories in the years that are to come the vision of wide breezy plains, of great rock-hanging gorges, of scattered hill ranges, and dreamy blue distances; of fields that seem to wait, in the rath season, for the grape; of the snows and ridges of white Saucy; of the vapour-wrapt, snow-studded Puy de Dôme. The fires of Auvergne are extinct; but there shall seem to be kindled in our memories, these many Aprils yet, some spark of the flame which still, perchance, is pent in the hearts of those mighty hills.

R. W. BADDELEY, B.A.

HUGH MELTON

A Story

BY KATHARINE KING, AUTHOR OF 'OUR DETACHMENT,' 'THE QUEEN OF THE REGIMENT,' ETC.

CHAPTER I. CHUMS.

'COME, Melton, lay down your block, and let us have a little chat ; I'm sick of whipping the water, as I've been doing the whole morning without success. What do you think of our new quarters ?' I was just winding up my line whilst speaking ; for, as I said, I had been fishing the whole morning without success, and had now returned to the place where I had left Melton sketching a few hours before.

We belonged to the detachment that had just been quartered at M——, a pretty town in one of the midland counties ; and I being infatuated about fishing, whilst my companion was equally so about sketching, we had gone out on an excursion, combining the two objects to our mutual gratification.

It was a lovely day in June ; the little river by which we were sitting came tumbling down from a line of hills that rose blue before us in the sunny distance, and the trees in their young bright green dipped their branches into the dark foam-flecked water that had not yet calmed into its ordinarily quiet flow, after falling over a splendid mass of rocks that rose in rugged grandeur a little way above.

It was this fall Melton had been sketching, and as I now looked over his shoulder I could not refrain from an exclamation of surprise and delight. The fall, with its mixture of graceful beauty and wild majesty, was charmingly rendered by his clever hand ; the little flecks of light on the foaming waters, the gleam that danced on the top of a small birch-tree that clung to an overhanging rock in the middle of the torrent, the white upturned surface of the leaves tossed sideways by the gentle breeze, were all given ; and there in the still pool at the side you could see the wavering outline of the stones as the water rippled over them. In the foreground, too, Melton was just putting in, by a few masterly touches, your humble servant, as he appeared winding up his line with an intensely disappointed face that sunny June morning.

'There, I have just finished,' he said, answering my appeal, and putting away his block, washing out his brushes, and otherwise making himself ready for a quiet chat ; for it was a curious thing

about Melton, that whenever he could get a pencil or a brush, he could not refrain from using it, and if he began to use it he soon got so absorbed as not to be able to attend to anything else. Therefore he now put brushes and pencils away, so as to enable him to devote his whole attention to the little chat I had desired.

'What do I think of our quarters, you asked me,' he went on. 'I like them; the town is clean and neat, the barracks are comfortable, and, above all, the scenery is very pretty. I shall luxuriate in sketching whilst we remain here.'

'Yes,' I answered, rather pettishly, 'that's all you think about; but the fishing is beastly, at least as far as I have seen to-day; and the hunting season is such a long way off, that there is no comfort in looking forward to it; whilst I haven't a chance of getting off after the grouse this year to while away the intermediate time.'

'My dear fellow, I really am sorry for your want of success this morning, and I daresay you'll do better next time; and if you'd take my advice, you'd try again after lunch with a lighter fly. Stay, you have a few feathers with you; pass them over here, and I'll tie you one I think will do.'

I did as he told me, and feeling sorry for having spoken so crossly to him, I watched his nimble fingers as he proceeded to dress a very artistic-looking fly.

'Now,' said he, as he finished, 'try that in the dark pool over there, and I think it will rise something before long; but first let us take our lunch now we are together.'

We lay down in the shade, feeling very lazy and luxurious; and whilst we are discussing the sandwiches of which our lunch consisted, let me tell you who Hugh Melton was, and also a little of his history, besides describing his personal appearance for the benefit of my lady friends.

First, then, his appearance, which I hope may not disappoint you, though I do not know that he was so much handsome as distinguished looking. He was unmistakably a gentleman, and, by the way, it is not every one even among those who really can lay claim to the title that looks so nowadays: tall and well knit, with good hands and feet, and a face that I never thought of calling handsome, though I always admired it more than any other I had ever seen. Imagine a square broad brow surmounted by wavy light hair, from under which looked out dark-hazel eyes, usually soft and caressing in expression, though I have seen them flash with the light of hate and defiance.

For the rest, his nose could lay claim to no particular type, and his long fair moustache hid a mouth from which gleamed a very perfect row of teeth. There was great determination and inflexible will in the straight eyebrows and square-cut jaw, and one could imagine that his mind once made up on any subject, he

not easily be induced to change it. Altogether, his would not have been the pleasant face it was but for the rare softness and sweetness of the dark eyes, that seemed to caress one with a look, and that always made me wonder how our colonel could have the heart to be down on him when those grave gentle eyes met his. As to his story, it was sad enough as I then knew it, namely, that he was the only son of very poor parents; in fact, his mother's had been a runaway match, and her relatives, wealthy people, totally refused to have anything to say to her as long as her husband lived; yet for that matter they might well have been proud of the connection, as he was, though poor, of old and noble family. He died, however, when Hugh was about fourteen, and then one of his mother's brothers condescended to give her a small yearly income and schooling for him for a year or two, so that in time he passed for the army, and was gazetted to the —th. He had been for some years with us now; and his old uncle had purchased two steps for him, so that at the time I am speaking of he was some way up in the list of the captains. Our colonel, however, had never liked him: we were a somewhat fast regiment, and it bored him to have a poor man amongst us; and Hugh certainly was poor; for though his uncle purchased his steps, he made him no allowance, and evidently considered that he should keep up with all the follies and extravagances of a crack regiment on his pay. So the colonel snubbed him, and was perpetually down on him, trying to force the unfortunate fellow to exchange; which, however, Hugh would not do, partly because he liked some of us very warmly, and chiefly because our home service was nearly up, and he would have had to pay a good sum of money to induce any one to exchange with him. This he had not to give, because, as I have said, he had nothing but his pay, and what he could get for a few cleverly dashed-off magazine articles. He managed in this way to keep himself out of debt and make both ends meet: but it was very hard work, and I often pitied him when I saw him consuming the midnight oil over those clever sketches we used to laugh at afterwards in the *United Service Magazine*. He was a capital artist too, and that helped his pocket a little; still he was kept hard at work to get a little ready cash, and it wasn't much when it did come. As we lay there lazily under the trees, I calmly puffing away at my pipe, he as ever dashing-in a hasty sketch of our shady resting-place (he seldom smoked, and he had always a pencil in his hands), I asked him what it was Old Crusty (our reverent name for Colonel Armstrong) had to say to him that morning, when they were closeted such a long time together.

He laughed—his gay careless laugh. 'Poor Old Crusty, how he hates me! I quite feel for him. It really is a pity to have a fine corps like this spoiled by one penniless vaurien; but really it is just my being so penniless that keeps me here, else I think I would

try and oblige him. However,' he added, 'what do you think he was saying this morning? You'd never guess, so I may as well tell you. It seems my mother, who is still handsome, and goes out a good deal, is thinking of marrying again. Now the person she has chosen is a merchant in the City, very wealthy; but the connection does not suit my uncle's taste, and he has sent me a message through the colonel, who is a great friend of his (being doubtless afraid to broach the subject himself), that if I will write to my mother, refusing my consent to her marriage, and farther saying that in the event of her persisting in her determination I must decline having anything more to say to her, he will then not only purchase all my future steps, and make me the very handsome allowance of 800*l.* per annum, but also declare me his heir. That's a bribe worth having, Charlie,' he continued, turning towards me, and speaking in a light tone that belied the fierce flash in his eye and the dark frown on his broad brow.

'What did you say? is the question,' I replied, thinking, however, that I knew the answer pretty well.

'I told the colonel,' answered Hugh, 'that it was very well my uncle had sent his message by him; for if he had come in person, I doubted much if I could have refrained from the pleasure of throwing him out of the window. The request alone would have deserved such an answer, still more the bribe.'

'And what did Armstrong say?'

'O, he pooh-poohed my sentimentalism, as he was pleased to call it, and laid before me all the advantages of being friends with my uncle and pocketing his 800*l.*; what a figure it would enable me to make in the regiment; and all the rest of it. Then, seeing me unmoved by that, he went on to state, that in the event of my refusing to do as he wished, my uncle had determined to have nothing more to do with me, but to leave me in future to sink or swim, as best I could. To that I replied, that while I repudiated the charge of sentimentalism, it was my earnest wish to try and do what I saw manifestly to be my duty, and that in no way could I feel it to be my duty to prevent my mother providing herself with a comfortable home in her old age, to gratify my uncle's pride. My duty lies to her, not to him; and whilst I consider her quite right in the course she has chosen, if she loves the man she intends to marry, I can in no way perceive the right either of my uncle's interference or the manner of it.'

'Well done, old fellow! I knew you were true steel,' I answered, raising myself on my elbow and looking at him, wishing the while I had his own gift with the pencil, that I might transfer that animated countenance, with its sparkling, flashing look of defiance and disdain, to paper. What a splendid fellow he is, and how he must have electrified Old Crusty, if he looked and spoke like that to him!

I thought, as, having finished my pipe, I rose to try Melton's fly in the place he had recommended. He took up his position for another sketch, and we both went to work. I had not been long at it when I got a bite, and soon was very busy playing a remarkably fine trout; he was a big one—over ten pounds' weight—so that it took me some time to land him, when, greatly encouraged by my success, I continued whipping the water diligently, and in two or three hours had taken about half-a-dozen fine trout.

'Why, Cairnsford, that's splendid!' said Hugh's voice close to me, as I landed my last, a fine three-pounder. 'What luck you have had! One doesn't often get such sport as that.'

'Nor should I to-day if you had not given me that fly. How is it, old fellow? You know everything, and yet one never sees you shooting or fishing.'

'I used to go in for both once on a time, when we lived in Ireland, before my father's death. I was very young then, but the little knowledge I picked up about such things has stayed by me, and I am very glad it has been of use to you to-day, Charlie. Now you can take the conceit out of that stupid fool, Southman, who is always talking about his doings in Norway, and who has not hooked a minnow here yet.'

'Yes, I shall enjoy taking that fellow down a peg or two. I can't stand his airs; neither for that matter can Old Crusty, though the fellow is made of gold I do believe; which shows that after all our colonel has some sense in him, if he'd let it get an airing now and then.' With which complimentary speech I shouldered my basket; and Hugh having already got his traps together, we set out on our way back to town.

I went into Melton's room on our return to barracks, and whilst he was washing-out his brushes and palette, settling his paint-box, and otherwise fiddling about—like the old bachelor I always told him he would be—I amused myself looking over a portfolio of sketches, which stood on a chair by the window. They were most of them views of places where we had been stationed lately, and I knew by a cross in the corner of many of them that Hugh had copied them for sale; for, as I said before, Melton eked-out his scanty pay by the produce of his art, as he was wont proudly and fondly to call it. At last I came to a more finished picture, which riveted my attention for some time; so that I did not observe Hugh, who came quietly up behind me, and looked over my shoulder for a little while without speaking. It was a portrait of a young girl that had so taken my fancy, and underneath was written in dear old Hugh's handwriting, '*Fais ce que dois adviene que pourra.*' The face itself was very pretty, with an expression half earnest, half laughing, great sweetness in the smile, and a very *malin* twinkle in the eye.

all, the head was surrounded by a perfect halo of deep

golden hair, not in any way approaching to red, but pure sunny golden, with a dash of brown in the shadows.

As I have said, Melton came and looked over my shoulder, without my being aware of his approach; so that I was rather startled when I heard his voice beside me saying, 'Did you never see that before? What do you think of it?'

'It is a charming face,' I answered. 'Tell me who was the original, and why you have appended such a very sage motto to so fascinating a beauty.'

His face fell perhaps ever so slightly as he replied, 'You often laugh at me for what you call my high principles, and strict adherence to what I conceive to be my duty; you will perhaps be surprised when I tell you I owe those ideas to her.'

'I should never have guessed it,' I replied; 'the face looks mirthful rather than serious. How came she by such methodistical opinions?'

'I don't mind telling you all about it, Cairnsford, though I would not tell every one; but this is how I became acquainted with her, and how she came to give me advice. A good many years ago now, soon after I first joined, I was quartered near M—— in Ireland, and as there were never many officers in that part at a time the few who did go there were entertained very hospitably and made much of. There was in particular one gentleman, a Mr Meares, who lived in a small place near M——; he had one daughter, this girl whose portrait you see here.'

'What,' I exclaimed, interrupting him, 'is that Miss Meares the heiress, of whom I have heard so much?'

'Yes,' he answered. 'At that time they were poor enough; since then, however, she has come into a large property, and is one of the richest heiresses in England. However, as I was saying, at that time they lived near M——, and I was a frequent visitor to her father's house. I need hardly tell you the owner of that face was clever, original, and spirited, without being in the least fast; she could dance and ride quite as perfectly as most Irish girls do; some, indeed, thought she excelled most of them in those accomplishments—and besides many other talents possessed no mean skill with her pencil. You may imagine that I, then young and impressionable, easily fell under the spell of her beauty and accomplishments; I spent almost my whole time at Belvoir (their place) and her mother, a charming handsome woman, seemed to see no harm in our intimacy. Day by day we went out sketching about the place, never going far from the house, but as the scenery around was lovely, always finding plenty to do. I, though acting as instructor on these occasions, often found myself hard-pressed to equal my pupil's productions; and from day to day by sprightly ways and clever amusing conversation me

and more deeply in love with her. For her society, and in order that I might sit near her and watch her, and for the hope of touching her hand at meeting and parting, I now neglected everything; my duties were shirked whenever I could prevail on any one to undertake them, and my art, of which before I had been a devoted student, was now entirely thrown aside, except during the sketching expeditions I have spoken of. Once or twice in that happy time I found Miss Meares looking at me with a curious, half-puzzled, half-anxious expression, and I wondered what brought so troubled a look to her sunny face, half hoping and half fearing I must be the cause of it. Happiness such as I then enjoyed was, however, too great to last, and for some days I saw the cloud approaching which was to blot out all the fair dreams I had woven for myself during those long bright summer days. Latterly Maud—for I had begun to dare to call her so in my own thoughts—had appeared sad and disheartened, rousing herself with an evident effort to laugh at the merry sallies I now and then made, in the vain hope of dispelling her melancholy. I was pained at this, as I always was pained by anything that caused her sorrow; and as her manner towards me had a tinge of mournful tenderness in it, I determined to take courage, and speak the decisive words that should settle at once the position we must in future occupy towards each other.

"It was one fine bright morning, when, as usual, I had come over armed with my sketching apparatus, that I came to this resolution; for some little time she had appeared to avoid these excursions, once so pleasant to both of us, and that day, when I came towards her in the garden, she said, with the gentle joyless smile which of late I had seen so often on her radiant face, "I don't think I can sketch to-day; I don't feel inclined for a walk."

"Upon this I spoke. "Why is it," I said, "that you are never inclined to walk out now, or sketch either, even those views which are close to the house? Have I done anything to annoy you? You are so changed to me lately."

"No, indeed," she replied earnestly, "you have never annoyed me;" and then she turned to a rose-bush beside her, and began cutting off the withered leaves, and putting them into a basket that hung on her arm.

"If I have not annoyed you, why, then, are you so altered of late?" I persisted. "You don't know what pain the least coldness in your voice and look causes me. I will not bear it any longer; I will speak and tell you."

"Hush!" she said, turning round so as to face me, whilst holding up her hand with a warning gesture. "Hush! I know what you are going to say. Don't think me unwomanly or forward because I tell you before you speak that I know what you intended

to say. For some days I have seen that it must come to this, and I have been turning over in my mind how I could best spare you the pain of saying—myself the pain of listening to—what will do neither of us any good, and must cause us trouble and grief. Stay," she continued, with a pretty imperious gesture, as I was about to interrupt her eagerly; "you must hear me to the end patiently; I won't keep you long. I think the best thing for both of us will be for you to know a little more of my past life than you at present do. It is—" here she paused for a moment, and I thought a tinge of colour crept into her pale cheeks; but with an effort she after a minute tossed her head with a pretty impatience I had often admired, and went on; "it is this: Years ago, when I was a very little child, an old friend of my father's died, and on opening his will it was found that he had bequeathed the whole of his immense property to me when I should have attained the age of twenty-one years, on condition I should marry a nephew of his, a Mr. Cameron by name; until then the property is rigidly tied up, not a penny being spent on me, but everything being allowed to accumulate. About a week ago my father told me this Mr. Cameron, who has until lately been out with his regiment in India, is on his way home, to claim the fulfilment of the compact entered into years ago by his father and mine. I shall be twenty-one in a few weeks now, and my father, who has long been obliged to live in great poverty, to provide me with a good education and those few comforts which our means afford, is now naturally anxious to enter on the enjoyment of this fortune, and insists on my giving this young man such a promise as shall insure our possession of the property, though it will not be necessary for me to marry at once. I can now only beg of you, Mr. Melton, not to judge hardly of me for having in this matter taken the initiative, and overstepped those boundaries of reserve usually observed by women; my only excuse is that I hoped to save you pain."

"But," said I, when she had finished speaking, "do you consider this fortune worth more than the love I have to offer you. You guessed aright what I had to say: I do love you; but if you prefer a miser's gold to the earnest faithful affection I feel for you then I would not utter one word to induce you to alter your choice for in that case you are not worthy to be my wife, or to take the first place by right in my heart, which you have already usurped there. I spoke defiantly and bitterly, for it seemed to me from the first decisive way in which she spoke that she had made her choice, and that, loving me as much as her cold heart could, she yet preferred the gold."

"She answered faintly, "Sit down; I want to talk this over with you. I have no one to whom I can go for counsel; my father and mother both have but one opinion on the matter; now

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Arthur Lamley, del.

W. A. Cranston, co.

"GOOD-BYE, MR. FORD."

yours, and try to decide between them. My earnest desire is to do what is right ; but now I don't see the right. I am like a person wandering in a strange place in thick darkness—I see nothing ; and when I stretch out my hands for something to lean on, I find only empty space."

"How can you hesitate a minute !" I answered, boldly and hotly, thinking I was sure of victory, and pressing on with an eagerness that perhaps caused my failure. "Is it not your duty if you love me, and knowing I love you, to give up everything for the sake of completing and filling my life, as well as insuring happiness to your own ? Plainly your first duty is to the man you love."

"Yes, if he were my husband," she answered ; "but until then all my duty lies to my parents, and their commands are strong on me ; besides, I could not marry without their consent. Yes," she added, with a dreamy far-off look, "I see my duty now : they have sacrificed themselves for me whilst I was helpless and they were strong ; it is my turn to sacrifice myself for them, now that they are getting old and want the comforts they have denied themselves hitherto. And you too," she continued, turning and looking at me, with a kind of enthusiasm lighting up her face, "you too have some object in life, some duty to perform, other than spending your days in careless enjoyment. With your talents you might be famous, and confer a benefit on your fellow-men ; and yet how little have you achieved ! See, I will confer a greater boon on you than if I had granted your request ; take for your guide through life my motto, *Fais ce que dois adviennne que pourra.*"

"I will take no advice from you," I answered angrily. "You yourself deliberately disobey your fine precept ; you have determined to sell yourself for gold ; for you love me—you know you do." Then, as anger and grief mastered me, I went on boldly and madly, "Only say you love me, and that you would marry me if you could ; it will be some poor comfort for me to take with me into my banishment."

She opened her mouth to speak, and I leant forward, listening breathlessly for the avowal my heart told me would follow ; but after an instant she shook her head, and said, "You would indeed have cause to reproach me for not keeping my precept if I answered you. It is precisely because I ought not that I will not reply to your question. How should I be acting towards Mr. Cameron, whose promised wife I am, if I spoke with you any more on this subject ? Good-bye, Mr. Melton. Some time, when you have ceased to regret this—and you will soon do so, for you are still young—then you may come and see me, and we shall be the good friends I would wish us to be ; but until you feel you can regard me in that light it would be better we should not meet again." She held out her hand to me, but I, maddened by jealousy and disappointed love, bowed coldly to her and turned away. At this insult I saw, as I

turned slowly from her, her large eyes filled with tears, and a pitiful pleading expression came into her face as she made one step towards me. I would have turned again, but before I could do so she had run quickly away, and was already disappearing among the thick shrubberies surrounding the house.

'Long afterwards, when I could think calmly over the whole affair, I began to see that, perhaps looked at from her point of view, she had been more in the right than I had at first thought ; and it was then I painted that picture with the motto underneath, and that motto I have ever since tried to follow as my guide. I fear I follow it but badly ; but, as she said then, one so often finds it difficult to know the right. A faint glimmer of light, however, there generally is, which guides one in some degree, and for the rest the will must make up for the deed.'

CHAPTER II.

THE STEEPLECHASE.

SOME time after this we were ordered to head-quarters at Aldershot, and found there a Captain Cameron, who had lately joined, and who took care soon to let us know that Miss Meares, the heiress, was his promised bride. Even if I had not heard Hugh's story I should have disliked this man, who was not only insignificant in appearance, but seemed equally contemptible in mind. A little fair man, with scanty yellow whiskers and moustache, and dapper person, always neatly dressed ; not bad-looking perhaps, but for the sinister under-hand expression in his light-blue eyes. I often wondered how Hugh felt towards him, as he sat glowering at him from under his bent brows across the table at mess ; but indeed I need not have wondered, for his feelings were often too plainly visible on his face to need any expression in words, and the new arrival very soon became aware that for some reason or other 'that dark-looking fellow, Hugh Melton' (as he called him), bore him no good-will. The time now drew near when some steeplechases which we had got up were to come off ; and throughout the whole camp nothing was talked of but the merits of the respective horses and their riders. There was one horse in especial that all the judges declared must win, if only his abominable temper could be kept under, or got rid of for the day ; but even his greatest admirers were afraid to trust their money on so ill-tempered a brute. Templeton of 'ours' was to ride him ; and in this fact lay the consolation to his backers, for they thought if any man in the service could master him it was that dashing 'light weight.'

Every one who has once seen Templeton sitting back on his chestnut thoroughbred, his hands well down and his head up, riding in the first flight with the Pychley, or, better still, flying along in

front at the Grand Military, will recollect him ; a small, spare, wish-looking young fellow, with pale fair complexion, large prominent blue eyes, drooping moustache, and a *nil-admirari* expression of countenance. But to those of my lady friends who may not have seen him in his favourite career let me recall the same slight figure leaning languidly against the wall in a ballroom, looking so intensely bored that you are reminded of a death's head at a feast, and long to ask him why he came there, when the festive scene seems so little to his taste. You must have seen and pitied him, gentle reader ; recall him to your mind's eye now, and have before you the intended rider of Spitfire (so the horse was called).

Cameron, who by the way hardly knew a horse from a cow, had a pot of money on him ; so had Southman, and one or two more. I don't like his temper, and so backed Jack Masterman, the second favourite, for a small sum. The race was to come off on Wednesday the 23d of July ; but on the Friday before, as we came in to town, I observed an unusual excitement on Southman's generally placid face, and on looking round perceived that Cameron, Templeton, and Hemmings, the owner of Spitfire, were all absent.

'What's up ?' I inquired of Percy Langham, who sat next me.

'Why, haven't you heard ? That idiot Templeton has gone and sprained his wrist with those confounded gymnastics he was always bothering about ; and so Spitfire must either be scratched, or some one else must be got to ride him. They do say that Cameron has nearly gone out of his mind since he heard of Templeton's accident ; and I hear he will be ruined if that horse doesn't win. He has gone now to the stables to find Hemmings, who went over there some time ago, and they say that he intends to ask permission to ride the horse himself sooner than let him be scratched.'

'But why ? Wouldn't it be much better for him if the horse was withdrawn ? He could then make a new book, or he needn't make any at all.'

'O, that's just the pith of the whole thing. I believe he's dipped tremendously, and the Jews are down on him ; so that if he doesn't win something now, he goes to the wall entirely. As to his not taking another book, that is because he fancies himself secure on that horse, and doesn't care for any of the others. Southman's as well.' Langham recounted all this in an undertone, with a rather amused twinkle in his eye ; he did not at all fancy the Cameron and Southman clique.

'But,' said Hugh, who was on the other side of me, and who had been listening attentively, 'can Cameron ride at all ? I never noticed he did much in that line.'

'No,' laughed Langham ; 'that's what makes it so curious. They say Spitfire will kill him, others that the horse will be killed ; any rate Cameron's safe for a crumpler.'

Hugh turned away his head quickly, and appeared to be busy with his dinner; but Southman, from the opposite side of the table, cried out: 'Did you ever hear of such folly as Cameron's wanting to ride that brute Spitfire? He's safe to be killed. I'm as good a rider as he, and I've as much on the race as he; but if it was as much again, I wouldn't ride that animal.'

'Show's that his physical courage is of a higher order than yours. We won't presume to compare your moral qualities, Southman,' said Langham, laughing quietly. He was a young fellow who had not long joined, universally liked for his gay good humour, but a most inveterate dealer in chaff and badinage, neither friend nor foe escaping his gay sallies.

Southman, wrapped safely from all covert stings in an impenetrable armour of self-conceit, answered quietly: 'No; physical courage is well enough in its way, but without being properly balanced by moral courage it degenerates into foolhardiness and rashness. Now if Cameron had a degree of moral courage at all apportioned to his physical bravery, he would reflect that it would be much better to bear a little dunning from the Jews, or, even though that is a disagreeable alternative, to be whitewashed, rather than run the risk of breaking his neck.'

'But suppose he was to be whitewashed out of his rich future's recollection?' said Langham inquiringly.

'Ah, there now is a case that requires judgment. That is just a situation in which I could show to advantage; I would show you how to steer through those difficulties in a manner that would astonish you,' answered Southman.

'Gentlemen,' said the colonel, who at the head of the table was beginning to look rather electrified at Southman's philosophical turn of mind, 'suppose we go out and smoke a cigar; you can resume this interesting discussion at a future period.'

We all rose and dispersed in different directions; I lighting a cigar, and intending to go out for a quiet stroll, to think over some family news I had that day received. I had not gone far, however, before I heard Hugh's voice calling after me, 'Stop, Cairnsford; why are you in such a hurry? I want you to walk with me.'

I turned, and as he came up I noticed a singularly white-set look in his face; the straight dark brows overhung gloomy unfathomable eyes, in which a kind of restless troubled look gleamed at intervals, and the firm determined mouth expressed even more than its ordinary share of indomitable will.

'Come with me to find Hemmings, there's a good fellow, Charlie,' said he, as he came up and took my arm.

'What,' I exclaimed, 'you surely don't mean that you are going to offer to ride that brute Spitfire! That's to save that fellow Cameron the fall he so richly deserves, I'll lay anything.'

'O Cairnsford,' began Hugh, in a hurried troubled manner, 'you don't know how I felt when Southman was talking about it at dinner. I was tempted sorely then; something kept whispering to me, "Leave him alone and let him be killed, since he chooses to run the risk; it's none of your business; and when he's out of the way there'll be nothing between you and Maud." It was dreadful, Charlie,' he went on, growing more white and worn-looking as the remembrance of that fierce mental conflict again overcame him; 'but now my mind has made up, and there is only this course open to me.'

'But,' I argued, 'how in this are you following out your favourite motto? How can you make out in any one way that it is your duty to run the risk of having your neck broken to save Captain Cameron's?'

'Why, it is as plain as daylight,' he answered. 'If Cameron is killed, it brings grief and sorrow on one whom I love better than myself, and whom therefore it is my duty to shield from all evil; in my mind you, I hold that we owe a duty to those we love, whether they love us or not. And then, again, if he dies I shall as surely be a murderer as if I had committed the deed, for in my heart I longed for his death; therefore I must offer to ride this horse, and the sooner I have done it and got it over the better.'

I saw he was determined, so said nothing more, but walked on to the stables where the much-talked-of steed was at present lying. There we found Captain Cameron in close consultation with Hemmings, with whom Hugh immediately opened the conversation.

'This is a bad business about Templeton, Hemmings. How do you intend to manage about the horse?'

'I hardly know,' answered Hemmings. 'Cameron here wishes to ride him; but I am inclined to think it is not only useless but dangerous to let any one ride him who doesn't know him thoroughly.'

'I came down to offer my services,' said Hugh, laughing; 'but it seems you have quite *l'embarras de richesses* in the way of riders now; so perhaps—'

'Well, if you really feel inclined to undertake riding him,' interrupted Hemmings quickly, 'I think you would be about the most likely person I could meet with. I remember seeing you out in the Quorn country once or twice on a very ugly brute of a horse, but it would have brought most people to grief; so that if any one of the Templetons can make anything of Spitfire, you are the man.'

'Will you really ride him, Melton?' asked Cameron. 'That's the most kind of you. I have a great deal on him, and it would have put me out dreadfully if he had been scratched. When do you intend to try him?'

'Well, it is rather late now—about half-past eight, I should think; still, if you don't mind, Hemmings, I'll take him out now'

and see how he goes with me. You can come too if you like, Cameron. I know a nice retired spot, where we can get a good gallop without being observed,' answered Hugh; 'and you, Cairnsford, bring out Jocelyn, for I may want you to give me a lead over the first fence. And now let's look at the animal. I may want him saddled and bridled differently from the usual way, when I know what his tricks are.'

Hugh's spirits seemed to have risen as soon as his perilous offer had been accepted, and I could not help thinking that though in the first instance duty had made him volunteer, yet now the excitement of approaching danger was beginning to exert its influence on his spirit, and he would not have backed out of the scrape if he could. We now entered the stable where this redoubtable animal was to be seen; there he was in a commodious loose box, and in truth, though knowing what I did of him, I could hardly restrain myself from echoing Hugh's cry of delight. He was a magnificent liver-coloured chestnut, with tawny mane and tail, small bloodlike head, a broad forehead conspicuously marked by a large white star, full clear wild eyes with a wicked roll in them, large wide-open nostrils, and long restless ears. Altogether his face was a picture, beautiful to look at, but promising bad times to his adventurous rider. Add to this a neck fine and light where it joined the head, but swelling into a massive crest and running into a powerful sloping shoulder; broad oval hind quarters of immense power, a magnificently-developed chest, and flat sinewy legs completed the *coup d'aile* of the finest horse I ever saw. No wonder Cameron felt sure of his money on him; no wonder Hugh felt a thrill of delight at the thought of riding such a superb creature, and began to think his sacrifice was no sacrifice at all.

There he stood, looking wonderingly at his unknown visitors, turning now and then, as if for protection, to the stableman, who stood near him with the clothing, that had just been removed, over his arm. Hugh, after a few minutes' admiring pause, advanced to take him by the head stall; to this Spitfire, though he retreated a little before him at first, offered no great objection, and Hugh proceeded to examine him more closely. After a few seconds he asked: 'What bit do you ride him with?'

'A twisted snaffle, sir,' answered the man; 'he's an orkerd temper, sir, and pulls like a good un when he gets his spirit up, though at times his mouth is too fine. This is the way of it, sir: if you pull him he'll rear up and fall atop of you, as sure as eggs is eggs; but if he pulls you, and you can't manage to stop him some way, he'll take you wherever he chooses to go, and that's most like to be the shortest way home.'

'Ah, very likely,' answered Hugh; 'but I don't intend to let him get his own way—I shall try a plan of my own with him.'

He then proceeded to give his own directions for the bridling of this formidable mount.

'Now,' he said, when he had finished his instructions, 'we'll see how he will work in that tackle.'

'Well,' said Hemmings, when he had done speaking, 'I think you intend to break your neck, Melton; I hardly like to let you ride him in that gear.'

'Make yourself easy, my dear fellow,' answered Hugh; 'I rode him like him before, who had puzzled a good many people. I found my plan perfectly successful with Rough Diamond, the horse you saw me riding in the Quorn country, and I can at least try it on this one, who seems to have a similar temper.'

This explanation satisfied Hemmings, and a few minutes after, our horses having appeared and Spitfire being now ready, we mounted and set off along the London road. When we had ridden two or three miles out of camp, Hugh pointed out to me a low hedge to the left-hand side of the road.

'Now,' said he, 'over with you; we'll go through these fields, leave that farmhouse to the right-hand side, and then we come to a splendid range of pasture land, up to the top of the hill yonder. Are you ready?'

I went at the fence, and Jocelyn, a grand old hunter, who, if all the horses in England were balking round him, would not mind them, went over calmly, knowing full well that there were no bounds out anywhere near, and therefore it was not worth his while to get excited. Once over I turned to watch Hugh, who put Spitfire straight at it, intending to follow. It was no use, however; as he neared it the ill-tempered brute wheeled round short, and on Hugh's trying to turn him at it again, began a violent battle, in which, however, the fighting was all on his side, Hugh remaining perfectly quiescent, it being above all a distinguishing feature of his riding that he never lost his temper, no matter how troublesome his mount might be.

'At it you, Cameron,' Melton called out, turning away and leaving room for the other to pass him; 'he may be more inclined to follow when you are over.'

Cameron did as he was told, but I fear from the sample he gave us of his riding, he would have had a poor chance on the chestnut; as it was he barely kept his seat, and was no sooner over than he asked me to change horses with him, alleging that the one was on was a new purchase, and not to his taste; he wished me to try it and give an opinion on it. For nearly half an hour the likey beast of a chestnut kept us waiting; but at last, finding there was no chance of his unseating or tiring out his rider, he took the flog in splendid style, and all three closing in together we set off the hill. The next fence he took capitally, going in the middle

between our two horses; but the one after I began to think might prove a puzzler, and felt rather anxious when we drew near it. When we were quite close to it, however, Spitfire crept forward a little, and, forgetful of all his former bad temper, took it splendidly; his rider, then keeping him in a quiet canter, continued up the hill.

'Well done!' I exclaimed, as I came up. 'If he goes as well in the race, he is safe to win. What do you say, Melton?'

'I think he'll go,' he answered. 'I don't fancy I'll have any trouble if I can make him take the first fence well; in order to do that I must accustom him to obey me; and so I think if you and Cameron would return home I will give him a little schooling about here for an hour or so; by that time I shall be able to tell you where to put your money.'

Cameron, greatly pleased at Hugh's wonderful success, readily assented to this proposal, and we rode off together. I did not fancy my companion, though just now he was in one of his pleasant moods, rattling away about his private affairs, telling me for how much he was dipped, and if the state of his affairs reached the ears of his intended bride's father, there was no knowing whether, being very straitlaced in his ideas, he might not take exception at the manner in which some of the debts had been incurred. All this low scheming selfishness was disgusting to listen to, and I could not help wondering how any girl such as Hugh had described Miss Meares to be could care for such a man. I was more and more drawn to the conclusion, the more I thought on the matter, that Hugh was risking his life for a mere fancy of his own, as, not to charge Miss Meares with anything worse, I was sure she would not feel any deep grief at hearing of her future's death, if indeed he had succeeded in killing himself in the race, which I permitted myself to doubt, for the reason that 'he that's born to be,' &c.—you know the rest, and will, I am sure, agree with me when you have a closer acquaintance with the individual in question.

At ten o'clock Hugh came in; it was still that soft perfumed twilight of the height of summer, and there was light enough for me to see his face, on looking at which I was not surprised to find he was fearfully tired.

'Well,' he said, throwing himself into an armchair, 'I had a dreadful scene after you left; but I fancy I have conquered him at last. If I had stayed there all night, I should have done so before I would let him go home without doing what I wanted; he wished to follow you back to camp. Give me a glass of beer, Charlie; I'm too done up to speak till I have restored exhausted nature.'

I gave him what he asked for, and then he described to me the terrible battle, where the fighting was all on one side, through which he had passed, ending by saying:

'And now, Charlie, if you have any money to spare, put it all

on him; for I think when I have given him one or two more lessons I shall be able to make him do as I like, and there is nothing that can beat him in Aldershot.'

The day of the steeplechase at last came, and I, being one of the stewards, went over early, and round the course to see that everything was as it should be. We had put up some very good jumps: one good wet ditch; a stone wall that, though nothing to an Irishman, I fancy many in camp would not have liked to negotiate; one or two fences of the kind they call double ditches in the sister isle; and some flights of stout ox palings. Altogether it was a course demanding pluck and good riding, though I saw nothing that a good horse, properly handled, could not get over safely; indeed, the committee had expressly desired that nothing of a break-neck character should be attempted. Hugh looked very well in green-and-silver, and doubtless many an admiring glance was cast at him by the fair denizens of the grand stand; but he never seemed to look that way, or to notice the pretty faces and brilliant toilettes which it displayed. Not so Gerald Courtown, the rider of Jack Masterman; that dandy ensign in his scarlet jacket formed a conspicuous object among the throng, and might be seen improving the few minutes left before mounting in flitting from one bevy of beauties to the other, receiving with evident delight an immense amount of chaff and complimentary badinage. Then there was Powell, in black and orange, rider of The O'Donoghue, a horse that might with good riding become an awkward opponent for either of the favourites, though for some reason or other the public had not fancied him. Good riding he was sure to get at the hands of Powell of the 2d, who was heart and soul wrapped up in horseflesh, and who made it his boast he had never yet 'met the woman he would care to look round at.' He now stood moodily watching the horses as they were led up and down clothed from head to foot, waiting for the saddling-bell to ring. Now and then he would begin an excited eulogy of his mount, The O'Donoghue, to any of his acquaintances who were unwary enough to venture near him; but we who knew him well avoided him at such times, as he was impossible to get rid of when once off on his favourite topic. Then there was Beresford of the Blues, leaning against the dashboard of a pony phaeton, in which sat Lady Blanche de Vaux, for whom it was whispered Beresford entertained more than a mere passing admiration.

It had been settled that the horses should take a preliminary canter before the grand stand, in order that the fair spectators there assembled might have a good opportunity of inspecting the different horses and choosing those whom they might wish to back, which last was decided by the rider on its back more than by the merits of the animal itself, I fancy. At length the saddling-bell rang.

Beresford tore himself away from his lady-love ; Gerald Courtown , with a laugh and a nod distributed generally to the assembled beauty of the stand, turned towards the paddock ; Powell's gloomy face lighted up for the first time, and the usual wild gleam came into his eye ; whilst Melton linked his arm in mine and drew me away with him towards the horses.

Spitfire was looking splendid, there was no doubt about that ; and I hardly wondered at Hugh's saying in a heartfelt tone of admiration :

'Isn't he a picture ? Isn't he perfect, Charlie ? Did you ever see so magnificent an animal before ?'

Nevertheless, the beauty thus apostrophised did not look amiable, though to my surprise, on Hugh's approaching him and petting him, he became considerably more quiet, and allowed the saddling process to proceed without any very violent effort to prevent it. At last all was ready ; the second bell rang ; the riders sprang into their seats, and set off in a quiet canter up the gentle hill past the stand. I rode quietly up a little distance behind them, watching Hugh with admiring eyes ; his perfect easy seat, his lithe active figure, that moved in unison with the motion of his horse, his hand well down, restraining with light but firm touch the impetuosity of the powerful steed he rode ; altogether he formed a picture of a perfect horseman, and, to my mind, out of the twelve men cantering at that moment up the green together, there was not one to be compared to him as regarded the perfection of his riding. Just as they passed the stand I saw Hugh glance quickly towards it, and bow ; I was surprised, as I did not know he had any lady friends near Aldershot, and I was on the point of riding up to try and find out who she was, when Templeton, the young fellow who was to have ridden Spitfire if he had not sprained his wrist at such an inconvenient time, strolled up to me in his usual languid way, holding out his uninjured hand as though it cost him a powerful effort to make such an exertion.

'Morning, Cairnsford. I say Spitfire will win ; don't you think so ? Splendid fellow that Melton ! Always knew he could ride if he chose, though he never would take the loan of a horse from me. He's got a hand that will keep that beast's temper cool, if any one can. I watched him passing up now ; not an ounce weight resting on his mouth, though the brute was mad with impatience. That's the way to ride ; he'll give those fellows a lesson, I'm thinking. Good-bye ; see you again at luncheon, I suppose ?' And so saying, the dandy horseman strolled quietly away.

I now moved up near the starting-post, and watched the arrangements with anxious eyes ; a few false starts would so completely rouse Spitfire's temper, that I doubted if even Hugh would then succeed in getting anything out of him. The flag at length fell,

and the twelve horses bounded away together; a beautiful sight they were, the riders with their gay-coloured jackets, the horses with their beautifully-shaped bodies glistening under the brilliant July sun, as though clothed in satin, springing over the elastic turf in rapid regular bounds, tossing their delicate heads, and straining on the bit in impatience to be free. I was surprised to see at the first few bounds that Hugh kept behind all the rest, going quietly. I imagined he must be doing it with a view to getting a lead over the first fence, but still I could not help thinking it an error in judgment to allow the whole field in front of him, as among so many there might be one who would set the example of balking, and then it would be all up with Spitfire. Scarcely had I begun to think thus, however, and before they neared the fence, the chestnut darted to the front, and increasing his speed at every stride, went galloping at the stout paling in front. 'He must be mad,' I thought, alluding to Hugh; 'he should never take that horse at a fence without a lead;' and mentally cursing his stupidity, I watched anxiously for the result. To my surprise, however, just as he neared the fence, the horse slackened his racing speed into a quick steady gallop, then rose like a bird at the post and rails, and the next instant was sailing along evidently held well in hand, to allow of the others coming up. Gerald Courtown and Jack Masterman popped over next, followed by Powell on the Irish horse The O'Donoghue; but Beresford, sad to relate, cannoned against Sims of the 28th, and came to ignominious grief before Lady Blanche's eyes. He picked himself up, however, but his horse had picked itself up first, and was now galloping wildly over the course, for some time resisting all attempts to catch it; so that when at last it was secured, the race was virtually over, and quite crestfallen his gay rider returned to the stand, where, however, he found Lady Blanche very ready to heap any amount of opprobrious epithets on poor Sims's devoted head, and condole with him to his heart's content. In the mean time the riders held on their course; one by one the outsiders fell off, all but one, Solace of 'ours,' a small slight fellow riding a lithe active Irish mare that seemed inclined to give the favourites some trouble. She sprang over the ground like a deer, switching her rat-tail and flourishing her hind-quarters in a way that told as plainly as words that she was yet going at her ease, and thought nothing of what was before her. A very pretty sight it was, too, to see her at a fence, not striding over it like our horses, but going up all together, something like a hare, and, like that animal also, sometimes giving a half turn whilst in the air, and landing almost sideways to the fence she had jumped.

'That one will give them some trouble,' said Templeton, who was again beside me, and who was now a little excited, for him. 'See, The O'Donoghue and Firefly are side by side; watch them going at

that wall; they jump so differently from the rest. Pretty, isn't it?' he added, as they went over together. Spitfire was still in the front, and Templeton's eye falling on him, he nodded approvingly. 'That's a clever fellow, that Melton. How well he took the measure of that animal's temper! I'd hardly have dared myself to take him first at that first fence, and yet I see now it was the right thing to do; he's a queer, nervous, irritable temper, that gets flurried and excited when he sees the others going before him. I say, look there—Firefly is creeping up to the favourite. I didn't believe Solace when he talked so eternally of his mare Firefly, and all she could do. I'm beginning to think more of her now. What a stayer she must be! She looks as fresh as a daisy, and goes along whisking her wicked-looking tail as though it was all play to her. Melton will have some trouble with her, I think.'

As Templeton finished speaking, the outsider and the favourite had closed up, and were now running neck and neck; the next fence would be the last, and then there were about six hundred yards of racing-ground before reaching the winning-post.

Solace's riding was greatly inferior to Melton's; there was a want of hand, and too great a desire to interfere with his horse's performances that put the little Irish mare at a disadvantage; still, to the intense astonishment of every one, she not only held her ground, but actually appeared to gain slightly on the show horse of the regiment, and indeed one might say of the army; the one of whom it had been said that it would be impossible to beat him if only he did not lose his temper. And he had not lost it; on the contrary, he was going splendidly, literally flying over the ground with his glorious stretching stride, yet never able to shake off for an instant the wiry lean form that with springing bounding action kept pace with him.

Every one in that great crowd held his breath as they reached the last fence; the pace was fearful, and the keenest judge could not have guessed which would win.

Suddenly, as they approached at a breathless pace the fence before them, a woman's long white cloak fluttered out on the breeze from the other side of the hedge; Firefly, held negligently by her inexperienced rider, swerved wildly, while Spitfire, kept straight with a firm yet gentle hand, flew to the front, clearing the leap in splendid style, and then laying himself down, advanced with lightning speed to the winning-post. It was but a moment that Firefly swerved from the track, but in that moment Spitfire gained the opposite side; close on his heels, however, the gallant mare, set right by her excited rider, bounded over with the spring and elasticity of a roebuck, and then stretching herself for the first time, and letting for the first time her marvellous speed be seen, she flew rather than galloped after her opponent. Very small was the ad-

vantage Spitfire had gained, and with the first two bounds she reached his girths; then for the first time Melton called on his noble steed, that responded gamely with every muscle exerted to the utmost. Breathless the crowd looked on, as the brown mare's head crept up to his shoulder. Was it possible? Could he hold his own to the winning-post? Two springs more would do it; but already the dark head stretched beside the chestnut's foaming neck. Another bound, another—and they shot past the winning-post, Melton the winner, by about half a head, of perhaps the closest race ever run in 'ours,' and certainly one that astonished the judges more than anything that had been seen for a long time at Aldershot.

The excitement was intense. So close was the race, that some fancied one the winner, some the other; and it was not until the judge had formally proclaimed Spitfire's success, that some even of his backers could be induced to believe in it. After a congratulatory shake of the hand to Melton, the winner was almost wholly disregarded; while every one crowded round the little brown mare that had come in such a splendid second, and that every one knew well could have won so easily if it had been ridden as the favourite had been.

'Why, Solace,' said Templeton, in a rather more excited tone than his usual languid drawl, 'where in the world did you pick up that animal, and how did you keep her so dark? She's a regular flyer, and no mistake; but for that shy the race was yours easily, and if you had held her well in hand you would not have lost it by that.'

'I know,' answered Solace, laughing good-humouredly. 'I don't pretend to be a first-rate horseman like Melton; still, you know, I told you all I had got a mare would beat the favourite even with my bad riding; and so she would if it hadn't been for a fluke. I bought her in the west of Ireland; saw her there and liked her when I was over fishing a few months ago, and have been trying to ride her ever since. She's a rough one and no mistake to ride when she's fresh.'

Courtown and Powell had come in close together third and fourth; all the others were nowhere, and now came straggling in one by one, greatly disgusted no doubt at their position, and as much astonished as any one else at the unforeseen termination of the race.

Whilst we were all looking at Firefly and talking over her splendid success, Melton stole off; and when I again came towards the grand stand, I was astonished to see him standing beside a lady, to whom he was talking with no little earnestness and animation. A glance at her face, however, enlightened me; it was the original of the portrait I had admired so much a few days ago—no less a person than Miss Meares the great heiress, and the promised bride

of Cameron, who also stood near, looking with nonchalant unconcerned eyes on his betrothed and her companion. I looked at her somewhat critically as I approached, and must own that I was not disappointed; she was even prettier than his sketch, and though she talked with an easy unconstrained manner and a pleasant flow of conversation, yet there seemed a mournful depth in her long violet eyes, as she lifted them now and then to his, that betrayed perhaps more than she would have liked to be observed. As to him, he seemed to forget for the time the barrier that existed between them; the excitement of the ride had flushed his cheek, and the exhilaration of triumph lent a lustre to his eye that made him look handsomer than I had ever seen him look before; while the same causes chased away all sad remembrances, and gave him courage and inclination to rattle on in a continuous stream of merry chat and laughter, as happy and light-hearted as though no pleading words and passionate prayers had ever passed his lips to her. I could not help thinking what a contrast he must present to her eye with the face, figure, attitude, manner, the *tout ensemble*, of her future husband, as they stood there side by side, eyeing each other now and then with instinctive distrust and dislike.

Cameron was in his gayest humour; he was standing beside the acknowledged belle of the day, who was, besides, one of the richest heiresses in England, for whose smile men were willing to go through any amount of danger, and to stand beside whom with the right that Cameron possessed would have made more than one heart there present throb with a rapture beside which all other joys would be cold and lifeless. More than all this, he had won largely; his creditors would be quieted, at least for the time, as I don't believe that gentleman ever had the least intention of liquidating his debts in full; however, he would pay as much as would render him safe, and that was all he wanted.

We were having a large luncheon party that day, and on entering the room with some lady friends, I found Mr. and Miss Meares were also among the number of the guests. They sat opposite me, so that I had a very good opportunity for observing the young lady; and the more I saw of her the more I liked her. I felt indeed as though the peculiar charm of manner Melton had spoken of was exercising its influence over me, and I am sure my lady friends must have found me rather more preoccupied than was pleasant or flattering. Hugh sat on one side of her, and I heard him say in the careless manner under which he sometimes hid deep feeling, 'Do you remember some very good advice you gave me the last time I saw you, Miss Meares?'

The colour flushed a little over that clear pale face of hers, and she answered, 'I don't remember ever giving you any good advice but if I did, I hope it has been profitable to you.'

'Yes, it was just about that I wanted to tell you,' he replied. 'I have ever since tried to act up to it, and though in some things I think that "*le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle*," still in others it pays; for instance, you would be surprised to see how I have improved in my art. Don't you remember telling me I ought to have a fixed object in life? Well, I have chosen painting for my object, and have followed it up closely ever since. I thought you would be pleased to hear what your good advice has done for me; I hope your own practice of it has been equally successful.'

Again I saw the tears rise slowly in the depths of her lovely violet eyes, as she turned away pained and annoyed at his frivolous and impertinent tone; his gaze, which followed her every motion, saw it too, and in an instant penitence followed his cruel speech. He leaned towards her, and said hurriedly and brokenly, in so low a voice that none but I overheard him, 'Forgive me; I don't know what I say or do. The sight of you has brought back hopes and longings I had thought long dead in me. I would never have come near you had I thought I should have been betrayed into saying anything that could have caused you a moment's pain. My heart is sore, and I have passed to-day through the bitterest trial life can bring me; but do not fear, I will distress you no more.'

She heard him, and gave him one timid hurried upward glance that spoke pardon, and I almost thought love, in its lingering tenderness; then turned away and busied herself with what was before her.

Hugh, after this, spoke no more to her; but I could see his gaze lingering on her every now and then, when he thought she was engaged with Captain Cameron, who sat on the other side of her father, with a look that revealed too plainly to my anxious eyes how utterly every hope and affection of his noble and still young life, with all its abundant promise of daring deeds and painstaking triumphs of art, was bound up in this young heiress, with her sweet pure beauty, her clever radiant smile, her loveliest tender eyes, her halo of golden hair, and all the dainty adornments of modern fashion helping, in their careful tasteful arrangement, to heighten and enhance a beauty already too dangerous without their assistance. The lady on the other side of him was fully occupied, talking to her next neighbour, so that he had nothing to call away his attention from Miss Meares; and I, who knew his mind, could read so clearly the torture he was undergoing, as he watched Cameron's attentions with wild vindictive eyes, that I almost feared those around me must see it too. But no; they were all too busy with their own affairs, and I forced myself to amuse my friends also, for fear they might perceive to whom my attention was straying. The longest day must have an end, and this one also at last wound slowly to its close. Our fair guests departed to adorn themselves for the ball we gave that night,

to celebrate the favourite's victory ; and I went off to my room, dragging Hugh with me, much against his will, he, poor fellow, no doubt wanting to go and brood in solitude over his hard fate, and perhaps deplore the softness that had led him to play into Cameron's hands in the matter of riding the horse. However, I would not take any refusal from him, and once safely inside my room, I pushed him into a comfortable chair and left him for a few minutes in peace, to collect himself and get over the exciting events of the day. After a few minutes, I looked up from some writing I was busy with, and glancing at him, saw his brow contracted by a dark frown, and the whole expression of his face so painfully sad, that I determined to try if I could console him. I therefore went quietly up to him, and laying my hand on his shoulder, said :

‘ Dear Hugh, what is the matter ? Can I help you in any way ?’

He started, and for a moment an impatient look crossed his face ; but it faded away, and with his smile sweet as ever, but unspeakably sad, he answered :

‘ No, Cairnsford. What troubles me now is a thing that none can lighten or take away, and yet that causes more heart-burnings and miseries than anything on this wide earth—I mean the anguish of unavailing regret, of bitter remorse. I saw you looking at me to-day at luncheon, Charlie ; and no wonder ; you must truly have been ashamed of your friend, when any distress even such as I had to bear could have made me utter a covert taunt to one so good and true as she. When I saw the pained startled look in her sweet face, and the unshed tears glistening in her gentle eyes, then I knew that I had been a brute, and felt that I should never forgive myself ; but the words had been spoken, words such as I should have uttered to no woman, least of all to her, who has acted all through this matter, not for her own happiness, but for that of her parents ; and no apology, no repentance, can efface from my mind the painful surprise that looked out of her startled eyes as she turned them on me, with the mute inquiry, “ And you too, you whom I trusted, and thought would have known me better ! ”’

Anxious to turn his thoughts from such a painful subject, I interrupted him, saying : ‘ At any rate, Hugh, I am convinced that if you had allowed Cameron to imperil his neck by riding that horse, she would, to say the least, not have blamed you for any accident that might have happened ; I fancy the gallant captain is hardly appreciated in that quarter.’

‘ You are mistaken, Charlie ; indeed you are,’ he replied earnestly. ‘ Miss Meares is not a girl to go before God with a lie on her lips ; she will try to love him, if she has not already succeeded in doing so, in order that she may fulfil the conditions of the will, and thereby provide her parents with a happy home in their old

if she does not love him, she will never marry him ; I know her enough to be sure that, *coûte que coûte*, she will abide by the fact.

I saw it was useless to say more on the subject, and so drew him gradually off it by a series of well-contrived questions about the race, merits of the horses, the style of the riders, the size of the leaps, though all the while I could not help wondering how it was that such a clever fellow as Hugh could have succumbed so entirely to that charming and dangerous beauty. Yet after all, there was no reason in his infatuation than there is in most men's ; it was not alone the beauty of face, form, and colour, or the charm of sweet manner and a silvery musical voice, that had enslaved him ; there was something far higher and rarer than these—the spell of a noble intellect, a fervid imagination, the attraction of a kindred soul and heart, a mind that could enter into and sympathise with the slightest moods and inflexions of feeling in his ; while above all, and over all, shone the clear unwavering light of lofty principles and unswerving loyalty to them. It was not so hard to understand after all, looking at it in this light, and I heartily wished Hugh had never known her, rather than that he should have been allured into a passion in which, taking his nature and her character into consideration, I had every reason to believe he would never conquer. However, for the time being I contrived to divert him from his troubles, and was not surprised when he announced his intention of not going to the ball that evening. I thought he was right, as seeing her again would only pain him afresh ; so bidding him good-night, I hurried off to the ballroom, where, as one of the committee, I was obliged to put in an early appearance.

CHAPTER III.

A THIEF IN THE DARK.

'Such an extraordinary thing has happened to me,' said Captain Melton, at mess, a few weeks after the race. 'Tell me, did any of the fellows see any one going into or out of my room yesterday, when I was out ?' He addressed the table generally, and looked a little red and annoyed as he spoke ; a most unusual thing with that cool and most good-tempered of men.

We all looked up, and Melton, from the other end of the table, called out : 'I was in your room for a minute or two yesterday afternoon, to fetch a book you told me I would find there. Why, what's

'O, it wasn't you I meant ; but any of the servants, or people of my kind ? You remember my telling you, the day before yesterday, of the curious letter I had received from that fellow Griffin, who

had absconded and let me in for a bill I had backed for him, enclosing me banknotes to the value of the 500*l.* for which I had been let in. Well, I intended to have lodged that at Cox's yesterday; but not being able to resist the temptation of a day's shooting unexpectedly offered, I went out, leaving it in my desk. To-day, when I went to look for it, it was gone clear and clean, leaving me without any clue by which I can trace it, as I had forgotten to take the numbers of the notes.'

'By Jove, that is too bad! It must be looked into,' growled Major Porter through his bristly red moustache, and colouring up at the bare thought that such a thing should have happened in his regiment; whilst every one's face round the table expressed in various degrees more or less concern.

'Did you see any signs of the room having been disturbed, or did it look just as usual when you went in?' asked James, after a pause, of Melton.

Hugh smiled, as did many others round the table; for it was well known that James, besides being the most indolent man in the regiment, was very probably, in right of that attribute, also the most disorderly, his room always presenting an appearance that conveyed to one's mind the idea of a Bedlamite's paradise. A boot in one corner, a sword in another, a regimental coat lying here, a pair of trousers there, pipes strewn the floor as though sown broadcast over it, the above-mentioned desk lying open topsy-turvy under the table, its contents fluttering playfully about the room as the summer breeze floated in through the open window—these were a few of the most ordinary appearances of the chamber; so that it was no wonder Hugh smiled as he answered: 'I did not observe anything unusual in the appearance of the room, but—' Here he stopped and hesitated for a moment.

'But what?' asked James.

'But that might be,' continued Hugh, still with a slight shade of embarrassment, 'because what would be unusual in other rooms would not be unusual there.'

This remark was greeted with a general suppressed smile, and was thought to be a hit at the captain; but notwithstanding that, a certain uneasiness in Hugh's manner might have led one to think that his mind was occupied with more important matters than his friend's disorderly habits.

James, however, whether it was meant as a hit or not, took it with his usual good-humour, saying, 'Ah, true, I daresay my room is not quite as dandified as those of you other fellows; but, now, what do you advise me to do about my money?'

Every one was eager offering advice, some urging one plan, some another; not that any of their plans seemed likely to *ultimate* object of securing the thief, but at least it made

He listened to with a certain amount of attention whilst enunciating his opinion, and afterwards—why it was another's turn to speak and he was forgotten. However, after nearly an hour's excited talk, it was found we were no nearer hitting on a plan for the recovery of the money or the discovery of the robber, as we were all strongly against bringing in a detective from Scotland-yard on account of the scandal it would give rise to; and it was determined only that each one amongst us should keep a watch on all articles of value in our possession, with the idea that if there was any thief among the servants, one such successful haul would not satisfy him, and he would soon be at it again.

Days passed away, but nothing transpired that could in any way give a clue to this most disagreeable business; and then days passed into weeks, but still everything remained in just as unsatisfactory a state as at first. At last one day, about two weeks after the event, as I was sitting looking at the papers in the newsroom, I heard several young fellows using Hugh's name in a way I didn't quite like, though at first I hardly caught what they meant. I stopped reading, and listened.

'At any rate, you'll admit,' said young Tufton, a newly-joined insign of the most cubbish appearance—'at any rate, you'll admit it was odd, Melton's being in the room that afternoon.'

'It would have been still more odd,' said I, rising, while I restrained with a violent effort my inclination to take the young snob by the neck and pitch him out of the room—'it would have been still more odd had he been in the room and had not mentioned it. And now once for all, gentlemen, whoever dares to breathe a word of the kind you have just been uttering before me must recollect that I shall consider all such speeches as direct insults to myself, and shall take measures accordingly.'

'No, Cairnsford, this is my affair,' said a grave voice behind me, whilst a hand was laid on my shoulder. 'I heard what these gentlemen were saying as I came into the room, and I warn them that any remarks reflecting on my honour will require to be vindicated and upheld in a way they may not wish.'

'You forget,' said Tufton, with a sneer, 'that to people suspected of appropriating what does not belong to them it is not considered necessary to offer satisfaction. Indeed, as gentlemen we couldn't do it.'

I was looking at Hugh, and saw the blood mount in a hot flush over his face, and a steel-blue light gleam in his dark eyes, as with bound like a panther he sprang forward, and before the imprudent youth could stir, he was held fast by the collar in Hugh's muscular grasp. Melton carried in his hand a strong cutting whip (he had just come in from riding Spitfire), and raising it, whilst the frightened youth vainly struggled to get free, he appeared about to ad-

minister a correction which, however severe, the cub had certainly merited. I was, however, for his own sake about to interfere, and beg him not to yield to an impulse of passion, when, dropping his whip, Melton flung the struggling sub. violently from him, saying:

'You are not worth it; the lesson would be lost on such as you. Stay,' he added, in a commanding voice, as thoroughly crestfallen Tufton was trying to sneak out of the room, 'let me hear who put this honourable idea into your head, for I don't believe your brains would ever have invented it without assistance.'

'Ah,' said the cub, brightening up, as he thought of bringing more influential names than his own into the same scrape, 'I heard Captain Cameron saying he thought it odd, and that he wondered Captain James had not inquired more particularly of you at what time you had been there, how long you had stayed, where you got the book, and all the rest of it; and Leyton, with whom he was talking, said such an idea would never have entered into his head, but that now it was talked of it certainly did appear suspicious.'

'So, then, Cameron is the gentleman to whom I am indebted for these insinuations,' said Hugh slowly, with a puzzled look on his indignant face that gradually assumed a more determined and convinced expression, while even his very lips grew white, and the veins in his forehead swelled with some hidden emotion. 'You may go,' he continued, turning to Tufton, 'and remember, though you may think yourself above giving me satisfaction, I can get it out of you in such fashion as may make you wish you had been a little less particular.'

Tufton slunk off, looking very much like a whipped hound, and then Melton, turning to the rest of us, said:

'Now, gentlemen, after all that has passed, it is necessary that I should see Cameron, and find out what foundation that puppy had for mixing his name up in this affair. There is no doubt he will be willing to give such an explanation as will satisfy me, and explain his meaning to have been void of offence.' So saying, he walked quickly out of the room, and we saw him take the way to Cameron's quarters. What occurred there I did not hear for many a long month after; but as this seems the proper place for it, I shall relate what happened, just as Hugh afterwards told me.

When he entered Cameron's room that gentleman was looking over some papers, but on seeing who his visitor was, he shuffled them quickly out of sight and looked up impatiently.

'Cameron,' began Hugh, 'that young snob Tufton has been making some very offensive insinuations about me, and he gives you out as the person from whom he heard them. He said just the reading-room, before Cairnsford and others, that you was a suspicious circumstance my being the only pore room the day those notes were stolen. I was very

young fellow the hiding he richly deserved, and I promised the others you would explain your words to have been either entirely altered or their meaning taken up in a way you did not intend.'

'And why shouldn't I intend it?' answered Cameron impudently. 'I do think it a suspicious circumstance; and if you're innocent, by Jove you're awfully unlucky, for no one would believe it.'

Hugh stepped forward and seized him by the arm, turning his face as he did so full to the light; it was an accidental movement, but for all that it helped the dénouement of the scene.

'You can't think that,' he said sternly; 'you know me too well to credit such an accusation, even if you dared make it.'

Here he stopped, for a sudden, and to Melton's upright heart an awful change came over the face turned full to his; it was a look of guilt and terror and abject cowardice, that brought at once conviction to the beholder's mind. Melton drew away his hand from Cameron's arm, with a kind of loathing wonder depicted on his expressive face.

'You were the thief!' he exclaimed. 'You! O, I had not thought of anything so bad as this; it is too terrible;' and he turned away, partly that he might not see the cringing terror-stricken being before him, partly that he might have time to collect his thoughts and decide on a course of action.

'O,' cried Cameron, mistaking his movement, and fearing he was about to go off and proclaim his discovery, 'for the love of Heaven don't tell! I was in sore need; all the money I had won did not quite pay my debts, and there was one man to whom I owed 400*l.* who would have arrested me in a day or two more, and then, though my marriage would perhaps hardly have been broken off, it would have caused a scandal that would have pained Maud; and indeed her father might have taken any measures. I could not bear it; and knowing where this money was, I was unable to resist the temptation, and took it. He could well spare it, and I intended to pay it back on my marriage; indeed I did,' he added with vehement asseveration, seeing no doubt in Hugh's face that he did not believe that last statement.

'My duty is only too clear,' answered Hugh; 'I must tell James what I know. I could never have believed it, Cameron, and am indeed sorry for you; but I must do what I feel to be right.'

'Yes, and be asked for your proofs,' sneered Cameron, who, driven to desperation, now determined to put a bold face on it and brazen the matter out. 'I think you forget all about them, but they are very necessary, I can assure you. My word is as good as yours, and I have taken good care you should be under suspicion already. Anything you may say of me will only confirm the rumours afloat about yourself, as every one will think you accuse me to try and ention from your own proceedings.'

It was too true, and for a moment Hugh was almost overwhelmed by the desperate situation in which he found himself. He had too great command over himself, however, to show how deeply his enemy's arrows had penetrated, and after a moment's silence, during which time he reflected that he must dare all or lose all, he resolved from his knowledge of Cameron's antecedents to draw a bow at a venture, and see what success would follow his audacity.

'Proofs!' he repeated, with a light confident laugh that had a touch of cynicism in its tone. 'I haven't got them now, but I can have them before nightfall. It will only be necessary to frighten your friend Mr. Solomons into letting us look among his entries for your last payment. The amount was 400*l.*, I think, and the time about ten days ago—' He would have gone on, but Cameron interrupted him.

'Are you the devil in person, or have you been reading my papers, Melton?' he asked. 'Curse you! What do you mean by meddling in my affairs?'

'You seem to forget,' answered Hugh quietly, satisfied that he had got the clue to this affair, 'that you began the matter by interfering with my honour and good name. In my attempt to vindicate these I have discovered what is to me an indescribably painful secret, which, however, can now be a secret no longer, as I feel it to be my duty to acquaint James at once with all I have found out.'

'Melton, for Heaven's sake have a little pity!' wildly entreated Cameron. 'Consider the shame and sorrow you will cause my intended bride; for her sake, if you are a man, spare me. I swear solemnly never to commit such an action again, and to restore the money with interest as soon as I can get such a sum together.'

At the mention of Cameron's intended bride Hugh's face paled, and his lips quivered with an emotion he could not repress, as he thought of her whom he loved united to such a reptile as this before him.

Cameron saw the change in his countenance, and quick as light divining its cause, saw in it a ray of hope, whilst it aroused in him a bitter hatred of the man who loved his beautiful betrothed, and to whom, his heart told him, she was not perhaps as indifferent as she might be.

Following up this ray of hope, he continued driving in the wedge deeper where he saw the point had penetrated. 'Think,' he said, 'of Maud. I admit I am most unworthy of her, but she does not know it; she believes me to be all she would wish me to be, and it would break her heart could she see to what depths I have fallen in my struggle to clear away those debts that raised impediments to our union. Think of her, so tenderly loved, so carefully reared, so noble and so upright in all her feelings, withering slowly away under the disgrace, or dying of the shock of finding out that the man she loved was branded with the stigma of theft.'

As Cameron, in hurried breathless words, drew this picture of Meares's affection for him and her anguish at his shame, Hugh cried away with a half-uttered sob that was heard only too distinctly by the man beside him, who mentally registered a vow that, when his opportunity occurred, he would make the fellow pay well for his audacity in daring to love his (Cameron's) betrothed. For a time, however, his eloquence prevailed; for after a pause Hugh cried slowly, and facing him, said, 'I could despise myself for being in any way partner in your guilt, and in not telling what I know I am in a way partner in it. But because you have prayed me by a power I cannot resist, I spare you this once, on condition that you shall not marry Miss Meares before the expiration of two years; and before that time has elapsed I hear of any other such acts on your part, I shall proclaim all I know, which will have the effect of at once putting an end to your engagement; for how ever well Miss Meares may love you, one of her principles would never consent to marry a man accused of such a crime as yours. In the mean time, I shall procure the money and send it anonymously to Captain James, you bring me your note of hand for the sum, to be paid before this time next year; also, I must insist on your explaining publicly, at mess, those words relative to myself, overheard by young Tufton, which have been going the round of the camp greatly to my prejudice. You will easily find some plausible way for giving them an innocent meaning. Give me your acknowledgment for 500*l*. That will do; James shall have it to-morrow. Remember our conditions.'

Then, without deigning to bestow a glance on his crestfallen companion, Hugh left the room, and presently rejoined me, saying I was right; notwithstanding which assertion, his grave sad looks raised a doubt in my mind that all was as right as he said.

That day at mess, Cameron, whose face bore no evidence of the crisis he had just passed through, said carelessly, 'By the way, Tufton, you must have strangely misconceived a remark you heard me make the other day, or else you cannot have heard it properly. I said I considered it strange that Captain Melton, having been some little time in the room looking for a book, should neither have disturbed the thief nor seen any appearance of the desk having been tampered with, and I certainly wonder Captain James had not questioned him more closely as to the aspect of the room, and the time at which he went there, with a view to finding out what people were likely to be about at that particular hour. It seems you have been drawing disagreeable conclusions from those very harmless and natural remarks. I trust you will not do so in future, and I hope Tufton will accept my apology for having unintentionally given rise to slanderous reports.'

Melton muttered something about 'Certainly,' and 'Pray say no more about it;' but his face was grave and annoyed; while Tufton

looked wretchedly sat upon, and didn't seem to know whether to leave the room or remain where he was.

So that matter was, or ought to have been, settled ; but as we all know, it is far easier to set bad reports going than to stop them once they get afloat ; and more than once I perceived after this some of the younger fellows, who had not yet learnt to know and esteem Melton's character, and others who, though older and knowing better, yet hated him because his pure and noble life shamed theirs, whispering together in a mysterious manner, always stopping suddenly when either Hugh or I approached them ; a precaution which was certainly wise, as I doubt whether either of us would have heard their discourse with patience.

The golden autumn days flew by quickly. I had one or two good days amongst the stubble and turnips, whilst Hugh worked away with unremitting vigour at his beloved art ; it was his companion and friend, his solace in trouble, his inspiration in joy. Always busy, his fingers seemed never to flag, his mind never to weary of it ; and I often envied the marvellous power of forgetting his griefs in a fairyland of his own creation that he seemed to possess. And yet not forgetting ; I am wrong in using that expression. Properly speaking, he did not forget his griefs ; he bore them with a calm fortitude that rose more from deep strong feeling well controlled than from any other cause, and he would set himself to work in order that constant occupation might prevent his mind from dwelling on its troubles, and eating itself away in useless repining.

BELGRAVIA

MAY 1875

HOSTAGES TO FORTUNE

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

CHAPTER XIX.

'Felicity, pure and unalloyed Felicity, is not a plant of earthly growth; her gardens are the Skies.'

THAT first difference of opinion—it can hardly be called a quarrel—ends as such disputes usually do between newly-wedded lovers. Each surrenders a little. Herman promises only to invite people on Sunday when hard pushed by circumstances. Editha promises to find a better cook, but stands like a rock to attendance at Sunday-evening service at the grave old parish church. Jane Tubbs departs, tearful and reproachful to the last, casting the burden of her sins on the kitchener; and Ann Files comes in her stead, after a charwoman, suggested by the housemaid, has come in to clean the numerous corners, cupboards, and secret places in which Miss Tubbs has accumulated all the dirt and broken crockery that has accrued during her reign. Three out of six of the Etruscan beer-jugs are carried off in the dustcart with other fragmentary delf; and on the first morning of her service the new cook informs Editha that there isn't a pie-dish or a pudding-basin in the place.

Cook number two is stout and middle-aged, a matron of eminently respectable appearance. She is a considerable improvement upon the last functionary in culinary skill, and contrives to send up savoury little dinners which do not offend Herman's educated senses. This is an unspeakable relief to Editha, who has grown to regard dinner-time as the baneful hour of every day. She has yet to discover that this treasure of culinary art has a hungry family circle residing in an adjacent lane, and deriving their chief sustenance from Mr. Westray's kitchen. Jane Tubbs contented herself with wholesale wastefulness and the liberal entertainment of an extensive circle of acquaintance; Ann Files robs more systematically, intro-

duces a more orderly system of expenditure, and therefore appears more honest. Those differences in the weekly bills which have perplexed Editha no longer occur; but the bills are uniformly heavy.

'We seem to eat a great deal of bread, Files,' Editha remarks blushing.

'Yes, mum; both the young women are hearty eaters, and I know you wouldn't like me to stint them in bread,' replies Files.

'Of course not. I should be sorry for them to be stinted anything.'

'To be sure, mum. Any lady would,' rejoins the cook, with dignity, as one who has a nice perception of what a lady's feelings ought to be. 'As for me, if the baker never came it wouldn't make much difference; half a slice at breakfast is all I trouble the loaf for.'

This is not unvarnished, Mrs. Files preferring malt to wheaten and taking her nourishment from the beer-barrel rather than the bread-pan.

That housekeeping is a very expensive business, Editha has not been slow to discover. She pays her bills weekly, and is precise and careful in the inspection of the tradesmen's books, yet somehow everything seems to cost a great deal more than it ought. There is never anything left from the late dinner that can be made available for the kitchen next day. Joints resolve themselves into 'pickings' for those voracious housemaids' supper; a hash is not to be thought of; curry the housemaids cannot eat. A beefsteak pudding for the early dinner swallows four pounds of steak. Ten loins of pork that Editha has paid for under the régime of Jane Tubbs would have kept an eating-house going. Ann Files affects small little bits of corned beef, which never appear as less than nine shillings in the butcher's book, and are never to be heard of next day. Groceries of all kinds disappear in the same proportions, and there is a heavy demand for eggs, butter, cheese, and bacon. Editha, without exactly supposing that she is being robbed, has an uneasy sense that the housekeeping expenses are much heavier than they ought to be. She has to ask Herman so often for money; and the sums he gives her—always liberal—seem to melt through her fingers. She wonders how her father can have contrived to support that great household at Lochwithian.

Herman is unconsciously a cause of expense. He has a habit of saying, when his dinner does not particularly please him, 'I love, couldn't you give me a wild duck now and then?' or, 'My dear I saw quails at the Roscius yesterday. Let us have some quails' and Editha will give any price the poulterer likes to charge for the birds Herman fancies. He likes an omelet for breakfast, and the strength of these omelets, Ann Files takes in two-shillings-worth of eggs daily.

Herman is now able to invite his friends to dinner without

during tortures as each dish is placed on the table; but the cost of these little dinners is awful. Ann Files is a disciple of that French artist who could reduce half a dozen hams into an essence to be contained in an ounce bottle. A shin of beef, two knuckles of ham, and one of veal barely suffice for the small tureen of clear soup which begins the banquet. True the clear soup is good, but still better is the noble mess of beef *à la mode* which Ann Files's sister-in-law carries home with her that night, under cover of the darkness; and savoury are those nice little shanks of ham which Ann Files's brother discusses at breakfast next morning. The Fulham confectioner's entrées at seven and sixpence and half a guinea are dirt cheap as compared with Ann Files's veal olives—a small dish whereof necessitates the sacrifice of half a fillet of veal—or those mutton cutlets which can only be put on the table at the cost of a whole neck of mutton.

'I uses the scrag and all the orkard bits for my gravies, you see, mum,' explains Files; notwithstanding which the article gravy-beef figures like a running accompaniment to the joints in the butcher's book.

Nothing ever remains over at these banquets, however small the party. It would seem as if Mrs. Westray's guests reversed the order of things, and adapted their consumption to the supply. But this phenomenon of total evanishment Mrs. Files is able to explain in a simple and rational manner, when interrogated timidly by Editha.

'That young man as comes to wait, mum, and a very respectable well-conducted young man he is; but as for appetites, I never see anything like it. The supper that young man eats, after he's taken in the tea and coffee, would astonish you. And it's customary to give them their suppers off the dishes as leave the table, which I'm sure you wouldn't like me to do less than is usual; besides which, if you balked him that way, he'd be putting his fingers into my dishes, and nibbling of 'em outside the dining-room door.'

'O, the man must have his supper, of course,' says Editha.

'I'm very glad we've no footman, Herman,' she remarks that evening, when she and her husband happened to speak of domestic matters; 'the way that young man Moiser eats is really dreadful.'

'You mean the fellow that waits. He's a very decent waiter, that fellow. Let him eat as much as he likes, dear, and don't you worry yourself about it. By the bye, what a charming little dinner you gave us last night! We are improving in our housekeeping.'

'I'm so glad you think so, Herman,' Editha says, brightening; 'but I'm afraid these little dinners are very expensive.'

'Of course, dear; everything that's worth anything costs money; but they must be much cheaper at home than anywhere else. In the matter of wines, for instance; that moselle we wore drinking

last night would be fifteen shillings a bottle at Richmond or Greenwich, and it only stands me in seven and sixpence.'

'O Herman, will you send in a little more moselle, please? I put out the last half-dozen bottles yesterday.'

'What, the six cases gone already?'

'Yes, dear; your friends drink so much at dinner. I used to put out three bottles for a small party, but Moiser told me he was obliged quite to stint people, and pretend not to see when they looked at him to have their glasses filled; so now I put out five or six, and there is never any left.'

'I daresay Moiser has a liking for moselle,' answers Herman carelessly. Sitting drowsily by the fire in that snug little study of his, he has just hit upon a happy idea for the third volume of his novel, and a man who has a happy idea cannot be expected to throw his thoughts out of gear for the sake of an odd bottle of wine.

And thus domestic life glides on, pleasantly if ruinously. Are not most of the roads to ruin pleasant? Editha is so happy in seeing Herman pleased with his dinner and satisfied with his breakfast, that she commits herself almost unquestioningly to Ann Files the cook, whereby the family in that adjacent lane rejoice greatly, and sundry visiting acquaintance of Mrs. Files, and of Mary Ann the parlourmaid, and Selina the housemaid, have a good time in Mr. Westray's kitchen.

'If one can't have one's young man to supper once in a way, one might as well live in the Black Hole at Jamaica,' remarks Selina to Mrs. Files.

'I've always been one to stand by my family,' says Mrs. Files after despatching half a sirloin to her kindred in the lane, 'and when I'm out of place I've always a home to go to, and no call to hurry myself about getting a situation till I can suit myself to my own satisfaction.'

The victoria is chosen, and the prettiest pair of horses the Westminster-road can produce. Herman thinks he has done rather a clever thing in going to the Westminster-road for his cattle, instead of giving the West-end prices for the same. A victoria will not serve to convey Mrs. Westray to dinner parties or theatres, so a miniature brougham has to be added. Horses, carriages, harness, livery, and those etceteras in the way of dandy brushes, carriage ladder, boot-top paste, leathers, and sponges, which are more alarming to the minds of the uninitiated than the larger items, make a hole in one of Herman's loose thousands; so large a hole, in fact, that very little of that particular thousand remains after all is paid.

As a set-off for this vanished thousand he has the satisfaction of seeing his wife in a properly-appointed carriage, as befits the of a popular writer; and Editha has the delight of calling

husband at his club three or four times a week, and driving round the Park with him on their way home. Hyde Park has a flattish dullish look to this daughter of mountain and flood, but to drive with Herman is not the less Elysium. The heart creates its own landscape, and true love can be happy in a garret, or within the gray walls of a debtors' prison.

So the days go on—drear November—chill December—Christmas at Lochwithian, where there is gladness and love inexhaustible for the young wife—frosty January—biting February—blustering March—sweet vernal April; and Herman and Editha have been wedded more than six months, and feel quite old married people. Indeed, to judge by the amount of crockery that has been broken, and the way the edges of the table-knives are notched and turned, they might have been married six years.

Not yet has Ruth come to visit her married sister, anxious as Editha is for that happiness. The winter has been somewhat severe, and has tried Miss Morcombe sorely. She is not so strong this year as she was last, and Dr. Price advises against any extra exertion just at present. In the summer, perhaps, she may be equal to so long a journey as from Lochwithian to London.

The Squire runs up to town in April, and spends a week with his daughter and son-in-law, and highly approves of their snug little establishment.

'Hope you're not going too fast, Westray,' he remarks sagely. 'Mustn't look upon your literary earnings as certain income, you know. Fashions change—new lights appear. That's how Goldsmith and Sheridan and Scott, and such fellows, always contrived to outrun the constable.'

'If Sheridan's wife had been as prudent as Editha, he would never have come to grief,' replies Herman. 'She won't even order a gown from a French dressmaker, for fear she should ruin me.'

More than once Editha has suggested that Herman's sisters ought to be invited to the villa.

'It would be a pleasant change for them, dear, I should think,' she says.

'Perhaps it might, love; but it wouldn't be a pleasant change for me,' returns Herman frankly. 'The fact is, I've outgrown my sisters. They were always older than I, and the progress of years has aged them more than it has aged me; so that the gulf between us widens. In plain words, they have grown a trifle priggish; take me to task about my books; tell me what Mr. Symcoks, the curate, thinks upon the subject of my latest fiction; regret that I should waste my mental powers upon the composition of worthless evanescent plays; and make themselves altogether disagreeable. No, love, we are too happy in our union to admit any jarring element. We'll send the poor old girls as many presents as you like—music, books,

hair-pads, ribbons, silk gowns—but we'll maintain an equable two hundred miles between them and ourselves.'

'Isn't that unkind, Herman?'

'I daresay it is, dear, but it's wise. Minerva never was remarkable for her amiability; but she knew a thing or two. Devonshire is the place for my aged sisters.'

The cheerful and congratulatory period of the new year has brought in Messrs. Molding and Korness's account for the furnishing of the domestic nest; an account which in bulk and neatness of caligraphy looks like a lawyer's brief, and the sum-total of which takes Herman's breath for a moment or so, like a header into a December flood. He had no idea that taste was so expensive an item in upholstery. That artistic simplicity, that classic chastity which distinguish Bridge-end House are as costly as any splendour of gilding and crimson brocade which a retired citizen could have chosen for the adornment of his brand-new mansion. Every one of those small devices, which seemed so clever and inexpensive, figures in Messrs. M. and K.'s account as an important item. Not an inch of ebouissé heading, not a bracket or a curtain-loop, but is separately entered.

Herman puzzles over the pages of that account as if it were an essay of Herder's, but he cannot question the precision and honesty of a bill which so rigidly sets out its smallest item, so carefully describes and identifies every object charged for.

He folds up the document with a sigh. The payment of Messrs. Molding and Korness will make a clean sweep of that little capital of which the successful author boasted to Squire Morcombe when he asked for Editha's hand. It will leave Herman shoulder to shoulder with Fortune once again, instead of being a few thousands in advance of necessity. He has been prospering since his marriage. *Kismet* has brought him a great deal of money in a very short time; his novel has been eminently successful, and he is well on with another comedy and another fiction. Henceforth he will be able to afford himself briefest repose from his labours, for he has given hostages to Fortune. Before summer has faded from the land he hopes to be a father; tender, sacred name, which thrills him with a strange sweet pride and gladness; holiest of all names given to man, since it is the name man gives his God.

Happy beyond all measure is that spring-time of their wedded life, despite the dissipation of Herman's little capital and the necessity for unremitting work. The young husband devotes all his leisure to his wife. He buys a boat, and keeps it up the river at Teddington, whither they can drive on balmy April afternoons, dine at a little waterside inn, and row up to Hampton or Halliford after dinner, driving home late in the moonlight. Editha is never so happy as when they are quite alone together; and as the *surripens* to summer, the little dinners, at which Mr. Tollemy

literary lights are entertained, cease for the most part, and Herman and his wife spend their evenings in the garden, he smoking and dreaming, with an occasional lapse into conversation, she reading to him sometimes—she reads beautifully, and it is one of her delights to administer to his pleasure in this way—or working with dextrous fingers at miniature garments of cambric or lawn, which look as if they were intended for that fairy page about whose small person Titania and Oberon quarrelled.

The young wife, worshipping her husband as only a single-minded unselfish woman can worship the imperfect clay to which destiny has mated her, has yet contrived to hold firmly by certain simple rules of her maiden life. She attends all those services of her church which she has been wont to attend, and not even Herman's convenience or inclination, paramount over all lesser things, is allowed to interfere with her performance of this duty. She contrives to do some good in her immediate neighbourhood—visits the dirty cottages in the dirty lanes; sends small gifts of broths and groceries to the sick and aged; strengthens the feeble knees with help material and spiritual; and earns the gratitude of the clergyman of her district, whose highest pride it is to call himself a parish priest, and who is never weary of labouring for the welfare of his flock. And these suburban parishes are not easy to manage. They have all the vices of town, and all the ignorance of the country. There are old men and women in those lanes who have never been to London—marvellous as the fact may appear that people could remain supine and incurious with the mightiest metropolis in the world at their elbow—yet the vices of London have come down to them: the artifice, the shiftiness, the plausibleness, the intemperance and greed of the metropolitan pauper, are to be found among these incurious Fulhamites, who, having 'never had no call to go to London,' have never troubled themselves to make the journey.

Dewrance dines now and then with Mr. and Mrs. Westray, and is surprised and honestly glad to see them so happy.

Summer comes, and in the late summer the fruition of Herman's hopes. A baby son is put into his inexperienced arms in the dim dawn of an August morning, after a night of watchfulness and anxiety; and he feels that he is verily pledged to the inscrutable goddess Fortune, and that his hand had need be busy and his brain prolific, for the sake of wife and child.

In reality, the wife and child would be but a light burden upon his industry, if he had not cook and housemaids, nursemaid, coachman and horses, wear and tear of stable utensils, breakage of pudding-basins and other kitchen sundries, grease-pot, servants' relations and followers, to provide for as well.

CHAPTER XX.

'Side by side thus we whisper : "Who loves, loves for ever,"
 As wave upon wave to the sea runs the river,
 And the oar on the smoothness drops noiseless and steady,
 Till we start with a sigh,
 Was it she—was it I—
 Who first turn'd to look back on the way we had made ?
 Who first saw the soft tints of the garden-land fade ?
 Who first sigh'd, "See, the rose-hue is fading already" ?'

EIGHT months more of Herman Westray's wedded life have come and gone since that August morning. The London season is at its height ; the Frivolity crowded nightly ; Mrs. Brandreth more popular than ever, delighting the town in a comedy which is not Herman's. His last effort, produced in the late autumn, has been that gentle failure which kindly critics call a *succès d'estime*. One of his rivals has followed with a clever adaptation from the German—domestic, tender, simple, almost arcadian—and the pretty fancy has taken the town, much to Herman's disgust.

Piqued and disappointed at this humiliating turn in affairs, he is working savagely at a new play, in the progress of which Myra is warmly interested ; so much so, that he spends most of his leisure afternoons just now in the elegant little drawing-room of one of the small old houses in Kensington Gore, to which Mrs. Brandreth has removed from sober Bloomsbury. The success of the Frivolity now firmly established as one of the most popular theatres in London, amply justifies some expansion in the lessee's surroundings and Mrs. Brandreth's victoria is one of the prettiest to be seen in the Park ; and Mrs. Brandreth's small Sunday dinners are as perfect in their simple unpretentious fashion as dinners can be. She does not astonish her guests with peaches before strawberries have fairly come in ; but her wines are exquisite, her *menu* has always some touch of novelty, and she never fatigues her friends by too elaborate a banquet.

Her house is altogether one of the pleasantest in London. She knows only clever people, and eschews the Philistine element. The mercantile and ponderous classes are unrepresented at that cosy round table, where art and literature meet in the freedom of a friendly Bohemianism, which never degenerates into vulgarity or recklessness of speech. Mrs. Brandreth is about the last woman whom any man possessed of the least *savoir faire* would be likely to offend by lack of due reverence for her sex. The very fact that she stands quite alone in the world, and is known to have been superior to any temptations which Lord Earlswood's wealth could offer, gives her an additional claim upon the respect of her circle.

She has altered her mode of life considerably since Herman's

marriage; it may be her steadily-increasing success, or it may be the change in her own nature. She is fonder of society than of solitude, reads less, is less alone. She takes more pains to cultivate acquaintance likely to assist her professional advancement; goes more to the world; seizes and occupies a more important position in society; works her hardest to be *grande dame* as well as popular actress.

Herman sees the difference, and wonders at it, almost with envy. He has spent his small fortune, and has not found it possible yet while to replace those few thousands which melted so easily in his first year of wedded bliss. Myra is growing rich. She has invested her profits judiciously, under the direction of Hamilton Lyndhurst, who guarantees a safe six per cent upon all such investments. It seems to Herman that in the race of life his old playfellow is getting ahead of him. Her fame is perhaps greater than his, although a less enduring; for however worthless the next generation may count his books, the books will exist in some form, if only to be perused, and afford some record of himself, while the actress's own can be no more than a tradition.

For Editha this second year of wedded life is not quite so happy as the first. True that she has her boy for the tender care and delight of her days—a dawning intelligence which expresses itself as often only in half-articulate babblings or monosyllabic utterances, which the young mother puzzles out as earnestly as if they were fragments of an inscription on the crumbling wall of a temple dug up from the banks of the Euphrates. To amuse him in his waking hours, to watch him when he sleeps, to nurse him in his small ailments, to take him for airings in the victoria, form the new joys of her existence; but even this happiness cannot make up for the loss of Herman's society, and of him she sees much less this year than last.

The spring is well advanced, and they have had but one boating excursion, and even that one was not unalloyed bliss, for Herman was self-absorbed.

He works harder than last year, and with less pleasure in his labour. He is apt to be irritable, and there are times when Editha's mere presence in his study seems to worry and disturb him. Her selfishness has discovered that he writes less fluently of late; that he throws himself oftener back in his chair to meditate; bites the end of his pen moodily for ten minutes at a time; runs his pen across a page of copy with a vexed impatient air; in a word, finds it difficult to please that most indulgent of all critics, himself.

The flying pen which has been wont to travel over the paper with electric swiftness, driven by thoughts too rapid for mortal hand to keep pace with, now drags along heavily, with only spasmodic efforts now and then to sluggishness. Editha makes up

her mind that Herman is over-worked, and tells him so, earnestly imploring him to give himself rest, to pause in the composition of his novel, to postpone the production of his play. The suggestion is to the last degree unwelcome to him. His vanity is quick to take offence.

'You think I have written myself out?' he says irritably. 'Then I suppose that last chapter I read you seemed flat and dull; had a faded air, eh?'

'Not in the least, Herman; it was lovely; but I am sure you want rest, for all that. You write so much more slowly than you used.'

'Perhaps I write a good deal more carefully.'

'Ah, to be sure; I never thought of that. To my mind you have always written so well that I cannot imagine more care being needed. But I daresay your next novel will be better than anything you have written yet.'

'I hope it may,' says Herman moodily, thinking of his empty coffers, and that some of the Christmas accounts—wine-merchant, corn-merchant, Fortnum and Mason—are still outstanding.

That play which progresses so slowly—some alteration or amendment being suggested by Mrs. Brandreth at each reading—is a thorn in Editha's side. Herman is now rarely at home on Sunday evening. Editha ventures a faint remonstrance one day.

'Our Sunday evenings used to be so happy last year,' she says. 'You went to church with me very often, and we used to have such pleasant walks afterwards up the hill to Wimbledon Common in the starlight.'

'Arcadian and delicious, dear. We'll have just such walks again when my play is finished; but for the moment business is paramount with me. I must make a success at the Frivolity before the season is over. But if you don't like my leaving you, why don't you come to Kensington Gore with me on a Sunday?'

'You know how much I dislike Sunday visiting, Herman.'

'In that case you must not object if we sometimes spend Sunday evening apart.'

'Sometimes, Herman!'

'Sunday is Mrs. Brandreth's only disengaged evening, you know,' adds Herman, ignoring the somewhat reproachful exclamation.

'Herman, don't you think it is a sin to devote Sunday evening to secular business? It seems to me that no blessing can attend any work which involves the desecration of the Sabbath.'

'My dearest, we don't look at things from quite the same point of view.'

'Indeed, Herman! I fancied we both thought alike in great things, even if we have different ways of acting in matters of detail.'



H. French, del.

J. R. Battershell, sc.

MRS. WESTRAY WONDERS HOW HERMANUS AMUSING HIMSELF

Long as they have been married, all-confiding as they have been to each other, Herman has contrived to keep his religious opinions very much to himself. Editha has thought him lax, but she has never supposed him an unbeliever in that creed which is to her the very foundation of her life. He knows this, and feels that they are treading upon dangerous ground.

'My dear, the amount of business that I get through at one of Mrs. Brandreth's Sunday evenings is so small that it need scarcely trouble you.'

'And yet you cannot spare me one of those evenings?'

'Well, you see, there is always something. I talk over what I have written with Mrs. Brandreth, and hear her opinion. She has a happy knack of hitting upon good ideas as to situation and stage effect. And then I meet useful people in her house—critics, newspaper-men, fellows who can give me a lift now and then. You see, as you don't like me to invite them here on a Sunday, it's an advantage for me to meet them at Myra's.'

Editha looks up suddenly, startled by that familiar mention of the actress, and Herman reddens.

'I beg Mrs. Brandreth's pardon for speaking of her by her Christian name,' he says. 'I hear her old friends call her Myra. Curious name, isn't it?' he adds carelessly; 'Myra—not by any means a pretty one.'

'Yes, it is curious,' Editha murmurs thoughtfully.

That utterance of another woman's Christian name has given her quite a shock. Ridiculous, of course, that she should be so weak-minded. She is ashamed of her own folly.

'I hope I have not a jealous nature,' she says to herself, wondering at that sudden pang which shot through her heart for so slight a cause.

But after this she takes a dislike to the Frivolity Theatre and all its associations. She is troubled by Herman's attendance at Mrs. Brandreth's Sunday receptions; he dines in Kensington Gore on many Sundays, and she eats her dinner alone, or countermands the dinner altogether, and takes a cup of tea and an egg before going to church. Lenten Sundays these, in every sense. The preacher moralises upon the vanity of human wishes, the brevity of earthly happiness, and she feels that of all the congregation his words come home to her heart most keenly. After church she goes up into her baby's nursery, and sits with him while the nursemaid has her evening out; sits beside the dainty little brazen cot, chintz-curtained and befringed, which Messrs. Molding and Korness have supplied for the heir of all the ages, and nothing particular besides; sits reading the *Imitation of Christ* or Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living*—that wondrous mixture of spiritual truth and shrewdest worldly wisdom; sits reading her good books by the little one's pillow, and only pauses once

in a way to wonder how Herman is amusing himself at Kensington Gore.

Could she take a bird's-eye view of Mrs. Brandreth's drawing-rooms, how that gentle heart would be wounded! The front room—by no means large, and a little overcrowded with those various elegant trifles, Sevres flower-stands, brass-mounted stereoscopes, majolica card-trays supported by chubby Cupids, which enthusiastic admirers have offered as respectful tribute to the charming actress—contains as many people as can find standing room. There is a buzz of conversation, which effectually drowns the classic performance of a German composer at the small marqueterie cottage-piano. The critics are assembled in full force, revelling in the discussion of various late fiascos in literature and art, or according loud and enthusiastic praise to the last delight of the critical mind, some literary weakling whom the critics adore as a Hercules.

The inner drawing-room is too small for anything but an oratory or a shrine, and here, in the lowest and most graceful of Louis-Quinze chairs, in a half-reclining attitude, languid, reposeful, picturesque, sits Myra Brandreth, dressed in her favourite black velvet and old point—the one costume which becomes her to perfection, and which she is too wise to set aside for the arbitrary varieties of fashion. The square-cut bodice reveals the graceful throat; the century-old lace veils the fair neck, and gives a Madonna-like purity to the dress. Small diamond eardrops and a yellow rosebud fastened in the bosom of her dress are Myra's only ornaments. Her large black fan is painted with pale yellow roses, and dangles from her wrist by a pale yellow ribbon.

'How fond you are of yellow!' says Herman, who alone with the priestess occupies this luxurious sanctuary, half hidden from the occupants of the adjoining room by the deeply-drooping amber curtains, and just large enough to contain a jardinière, a coffee-table, and three easy-chairs.

'Yes, I like the colour; perhaps because it is not a general favourite.'

'The colour of jealousy, of amaranth and asphodel, the chosen flowers of death.'

He is leaning over her chair playing with her fan, furling and unfurling it perpetually for his own amusement. If gentlemen never so amused themselves, fans would be everlasting wear.

'Death and I are very good friends,' replies Myra, with a sigh. 'I have so little to live for.'

'Why, I thought you had everything in the world that can make life worth living—fame, success, money, a profession you adore.'

'Yes, I am very fond of acting. That and music are the only arts which take one out of oneself.'

'In your case I should have fancied self so agreeable a subject that you would hardly care to be carried away from it. I should have supposed you had not a care or a sorrow.'

'Herman!' she exclaims, turning her dark hazel eyes upon him slowly; they are at their softest to-night, with a veiled look which is almost like tears. 'You ought to know me better than that.'

He remembers another Sunday evening long ago, and a certain question of Myra's, together with the reply he made thereto; remembers with a faint sigh. Would it not have been better, would it not have been wiser, to accept what was then offered him? Infinitely wiser than to be hankering after it now, assuredly; but this reply an unobtrusive conscience does not suggest to Mr. Westray.

Would it not have been wiser to have returned to his old love two years ago, to have accepted the gem that was offered to him—not quite a flawless gem, it is true, but with a wonderful sparkle about it? These Sunday evenings at Kensington Gore are so pleasant; Myra's little dinners so much more *recherchés* and various than the little dinners at home, which are apt to repeat themselves. And life is made up of small pleasures; it is an infinite series of nothings. High principles and noble thoughts are like Alpine peaks, very grand and very beautiful to contemplate from a distance; but easy manners and exquisite taste in details are the castors on which the armchair of life runs easily over the carpet of the world.

Myra and Herman talk of old times now and then—talk of the dead-and-gone fathers whom they both loved; and are drawn very near to each other by these tender memories.

'Have you been to Colehaven within the last few years?' Myra asks.

'Not since my mother's death. I used to run down pretty often in her time.'

'I have not been there since my father died and Mrs. Pompion came to fetch me away,' says Myra. 'It is not for want of love, but for want of courage, that I have never been to see my father's grave.'

And then somehow Myra tells the story of her marriage, in her own highly-picturesque representation of which event she appears as the victim of Mrs. Pompion's worldliness—not to say cruelty.

'She made me understand that I was homeless and penniless, and that I should be doing her a wrong by prolonging my dependence upon her an hour longer than I was obliged.'

'You might have found independence with me, Myra,' is the reproachful suggestion.

'Yes, and blighted your career at the very outset,' replies Myra, who remembers perfectly well that at this stage of Herman's life his sole means were represented by a scholarship and 50*l.* a year from his father.

'Poor Charley!' she sighs; 'I never loved him, but he was very good to me.'

Lord Earlswood cuts short these somewhat sentimental conversations now and then, and having very little to say for himself seems slightly in the way. He is painfully jealous of Herman, yet has no ground for complaint, having, in fact, no status. Society in general in the Kensington Gore drawing-rooms is aware of his lordship's jealousy, and of Mrs. Braudreth's sentimental affection for the author; and 'poor Lady Earlswood' and 'poor Mrs. Westray' receive a due amount of somewhat scornful pity.

CHAPTER XXI.

'Aussi se permit-elle alors de protéger de petits jeunes gens ravisants, des artistes, des gens de lettres nouveau-nés à la gloire, qui niaient les anciens et les modernes, et tâchaient de se faire une grande réputation en faisant peu de chose.'

HERMAN's novel brings him some hundreds, and enables him to pay wine-merchant and corn-merchant and re-establish his balance at his banker's; but not to save a sixpence. He has acquired extravagant habits, lives among extravagant people, and has that noble recklessness about trifling expenditure which seems the distinguishing characteristic of a superior mind, and which brings so many superior minds to the workhouse. The unheeded pence run away with their big brothers the pounds, and Herman's *menus plaisirs* are almost as costly as Ann Files's hungry relatives. His cigars are the choicest that money can buy, and he has always a liberal supply at the service of his friends. He never touches cards, and boasts of that negative virtue as an example of the prudence which befits a family man; but he spends a good deal of money upon hansom cabs, and a good deal more upon brie-à-brac, indulging his artistic taste to the uttermost when he sees anything worth carrying home to the nest at Fulham. Sometimes he takes Myra a Viennese cup and saucer, rich in costliest gilding, or a Carl Theodore *dejeuner*; for is he not under considerable obligation to that lady for his dramatic successes?

These small gifts are the pabulum of friendship.

The balance at his banker's diminishes with alarming rapidity, and he is just beginning to contemplate a serious reformation in his habits; indeed, on one of those happy evenings when he seems to return to his old self, he goes so far as to announce his intention to his wife. Never before has he spoken to her of money matters, but has allowed her to suppose that his resources are in a manner inexhaustible.

'I'll tell you what it is, Editha; I mean to turn over a new leaf,' he says, as she sits opposite to him in the little study by the cheerful evening fire. The April sunset reddens the sky above the flat

of Fulham, the gray twilight creeps over asparagus-beds, cabbage-gardens, the baby lies in his mother's lap chuckling, crowing at the fire, and lifting up his small muffled feet to be tickled with by his admiring parents. Quite a domestic picture, curiously contrastive to last Sunday evening in Kensington.

'In what way, dearest?' asks the fond wife. 'Not to work so hard, I hope.'

'Quite the contrary, dear. To work harder than ever, and to be a miser. I can't be too careful or too anxious about the future. I've this little one to think about, to say nothing of the provision of brothers and sisters who will naturally follow his footsteps. I shall leave off cigars henceforth.'

'O Herman, you are so fond of your cigar!'

'A pipe is ever so much better.'

'You can't smoke a pipe at your club, dear.'

'Then I shall spend so much the less time at my club.'

'And so much more at home! Ah, Herman, I shall be grateful for your pipe if it brings about that result!'

'And then there's the money I waste in hansom cabs; quite a fortune for Master Squaretoes here, if it were to accumulate at compound interest. I shall give up cabs and take to walking. Nothing so bad for a man's heart as the perpetual friction of locomotion, which he is only a passive agent.'

Virtuous resolves, so pleasant a subject for conversation by the evening fire, inspired by the companionship of wife and child; but next time Herman is in a hurry to get to Kensington Gore he is the smartest hansom on the stand, and gives the man double for driving him at the rate of twelve miles an hour.

Early in May the new piece is produced to a brilliant audience, is a positive success. With this stroke of fortune all Herman's resolutions melt away. He has but to write to be rich. There is a bottomless gold mine in his ink-pot. He thinks of Sir Walter Scott, who, at nearly sixty years of age, in a brief span of herculean career, earned by his pen the almost incredible sum of 100,000*l.*; he believes that for him, too, literature will be an ever-flourishing pagoda-tree, whose golden fruit he can pluck to the end of his life.

He is intoxicated by the enthusiastic reception of his new play, and after that odious *succès d'estime*, and his gratitude to Myra for her suggestions is boundless. He buys a sapphire locket out of the first proceeds of the drama—antique, classical, expensive—and with his own hands hangs it upon Mrs. Brandreth's fair throat. He buys a snowy-plumed hat for baby the day after, and Editha's eyes fill with tears at the thought that he should have considered the little one.

'And now that the play is produced, dearest, we shall have our old Sunday evenings again, I hope,' Editha says gently.

'Yes, love, I can give you some of my Sundays now. But I am going to put a new comedy on the stocks directly, and I shall want to consult Mrs. Brandreth now and then. She has such a masterly knowledge of dramatic effect.'

'How I envy her the delight of assisting you! It seems as if she were almost a partner in your work.'

'Not quite, dear,' answers Herman, with a supercilious smile; 'but her advice is useful upon all technical points. And then her house is one of the pleasantest I know. One meets such nice people there.'

'If you could only bring the same people here, Herman!' says Editha, with a sigh. She would do anything except sacrifice principle to have her full share in her husband's life, and she feels with a pang that it is slipping away from her somehow. Jealous of Mrs. Brandreth in the vulgar sense of the word she is not, for her mind is too pure to imagine evil. But she envies Myra those gifts which render her society valuable and her house charming to Herman.

'Not so easy, my love. We are farther from town—objection number one. The people who go to Mrs. Brandreth's will drive a mile and a half, but don't care about driving three miles. Then you set your face against Sunday receptions—objection number two. The people I meet at Mrs. Brandreth's like Sunday visiting.'

'Could we not have an evening once a week, on which your friends could come to you in an unceremonious way, Herman?' suggests Editha timidly. 'Dinner-parties are so expensive, and we have quite enough of them already. But perhaps if these people you like so much knew that you were at home on a particular evening, they would come to us.'

'I thought you were too much wrapped up in baby for that kind of thing; we've been degenerating into domesticity since that young gentleman's arrival. However, perhaps it's not a bad idea. I'll get you some cards printed, and we'll have our weekly reception—say Tuesday evening; music and conversation, tea and coffee, light wines, sandwiches. Dr. Johnson says that no man, however intellectual, likes to leave a house exactly in the same condition he entered it. Human nature requires some sustaining element, if only sherry and sandwiches.'

Editha is delighted, for this will give her at least one evening in the week on which she will be sure of her husband's society.

The Tuesday evenings, in a certain unpretentious way, are a success. Kensington and Chelsea are rich in artists and literary men, and these are Herman's favourite companions. The distance is easy between Fulham and these abodes of art and letters; painters, playwrights, poets, and their natural enemies and boon companions

the critics, rattle down to Bridge-end House in hansoms, and walk home in a merry band by moonlight or starlight, sometimes ever so long after midnight has struck from the two grave old churches whose towers stand dark and square against the sky, like twin warders of the river.

Very merry are these evenings, very full of mirth and wit, nights to be remembered—verily ‘society;’ curiously different from the stately interchange of civilities among the little-great of suburb or country town, who disseminate dulness at measured intervals, and call it ‘visiting.’

The buffet in the little Pompeian dining-room is always liberally furnished. Herman’s den serves as smoking-room, and is sometimes crowded to suffocation with noisy disputants, who can talk louder here than in Mrs. Westray’s drawing-room, where the wives are comparing notes about babies with Editha, and repeating the last *mot* from the nursery. Some of the wives and sisters are musical, and there are songs and sonatas to diversify the evening’s entertainment. Curious-looking foreigners, whom Herman picks up at his club, come down occasionally, and draw strange and subtle harmonies from the Broadwood miniature grand. But conversation is the great feature of the assembly. That never flags. Samuel Johnson and his chosen circle never discussed a wider range of topics, never soared to the immensities or descended to the trivialities, with bolder wing than Mr. Westray and his friends. Barkly Tolley often exhibits his tall figure and wise gray head among the younger guests, and discusses the various problems of a phenomenal universe with Herman. Editha has left off listening to these metaphysical arguments. She is happy in having Herman near her, in seeing him pleased and amused, and in knowing that at least for this one night in the week his own house is as attractive to him as Mrs. Brandreth’s. True there are people who go to the popular actress who never come here—distinguished members of the patrician order, who think it a favour to be presented to the popular manageress of the Frivolity; famous doctors, famous lawyers, who like to relax the tension of the bow in Myra’s pretty drawing-room, and to have their last pet anecdote laughed at by the favourite actress; while Herman, being only an author, is but little sought by the great. But he has the society he likes best, and is satisfied.

The Bordeaux and light German wines, the chicken and anchovy sandwiches, the effervescing waters and old cognac, the tea and coffee and pound cakes and Presburg biscuits, consumed at these weekly réunions cost something; but Editha is too pleased with Herman’s pleasure to count the cost, and so life glides on calmly, almost happily, for the young wife, despite those melancholy Sunday evenings when her husband is planning a new play at Kensington Gore.

Among the most constant guests at Mrs. Westray's Tuesdays is Hamilton Lyndhurst. He is such a near neighbour, as he tells Editha, and it is easy for him to drop in. Indeed, he has not waited for the institution of these weekly receptions to become a frequent dropper-in. He has spent many an evening in the little Dutch drawing-room—with its green-damask walls and old delft jars and quaint tulipwood cabinets—furnished after a Dutch picture.

He has contrived somehow to make himself a friend of the family, to subordinate all those characteristics which Herman observed in him at the beginning of their acquaintance, and to get himself, in a manner, rehabilitated in his friend's mind. Before his marriage Herman had made up his mind that Lyndhurst was one of those desirable bachelor acquaintances who ought to be buried in the grave of a man's bachelorhood; but since his marriage he has come to think that Lyndhurst is a very good fellow after all, with rather too much audacity in expressing his opinions among men, perhaps, but a man of kindly feeling and genuine good-nature, and with a perfect appreciation of good and pure-minded women.

To Editha Mr. Lyndhurst has succeeded in making himself eminently agreeable. He has dropped-in when husband and wife have been alone together in Herman's study, and has contrived to fall into that small domestic circle without causing a break in its unity. He can talk well when he likes, he sings and plays exquisitely, and seems never so well pleased as when Mrs. Westray asks him to go to the piano. That musical genius gives him an elevated air in Editha's mind; she cannot imagine evil in a man who can interpret the great classic composers with such divine expression, and whose deep pathetic voice rises in power and grandeur with the grandeur of his theme.

CHAPTER XXII.

'Aus dieser Erde quillen meine Freuden,
Und diese Sonne scheint meinen Leiden;
Kann ich mich erst von ihnen scheiden,
Dann mag, was will und kann, geschehn.'

THE Tuesdays have been established for nearly two months—the London season is over. It is Sunday, late in July, and Editha is thinking rather sadly of an approaching visit to Lochwithian with her boy; sadly because Herman pleads his literary work as a reason for staying in London, while she goes alone to exhibit her firstborn to the fond and admiring eyes of his aunt and grandfather.

'But surely, dear Herman, you could write better at Lochwithian,' she pleads, when first this bitter fact of his preferring to remain in town is made known to her; 'the pure air, the quiet—'

'My dearest, pray sink that absurd notion about rustic tran-

quillity. Dogs barking, cocks crowing, guns firing—your father coming in to propose a ride—Mr. Petherick bursting in upon us with the news of some startling event in the village—Betsy Jones has had a letter from her brother in America—or Polly Evans's little boy has set fire to his pinafore. And then there is the temptation which the smiling green hills, and the busy babbling water-falls, and the glad wide blue sky, are always offering a man to go out of doors and be idle and happy. I never could stay long within four walls in the country.'

'But think what good rest and mountain-air would do your health, Herman,' replies Editha anxiously.

'My love, it is not a question of health, but of getting my book finished within a given time,' he answers, somewhat impatiently. 'I can work nowhere so well as in this little room. Molding and Orness may have charged rather dear for their notions of comfort, but they have certainly succeeded in making me comfortable. This is the dearest place in the world, and when you and the little one are here, a domestic Eden.'

The tender speech, coming upon her in the midst of her disappointment, moves Editha almost to tears. She takes up her husband's hand and kisses it.

'Dear hand, which works so hard for baby and me!' she exclaims.

Herman draws her to him with a sigh.

'Dear love, I have worked hard enough, but perhaps I have not been quite so prudent as I ought to be. I am not saving money, and a man who has given hostages to Fortune should have his modest share of the Three per Cents.'

'But you are not in difficulties, Herman?' Editha inquires anxiously.

'No, dear, not in difficulties,' he answers, with a faint gulp, as conscience were swallowing a pill. 'I am only a little anxious about your future and the little one's if—if anything were to happen to me; like poor Mandeville for instance.'

Mandeville is a writer of promise who has perished untimely, leaving a wife and children, and not so much as a scuttle of coals or a bundle of firewood in his house.

'Herman, don't talk of such a thing!' cries Editha, pale with grief, at the suggestion that her beloved is mortal.

'No, dear, it is not a thing to talk about; but it is a thing that a man can't help thinking about now and then, when he looks in the faces of his children and remembers how brief a journey it must be for them from his deathbed to the workhouse.'

'Then we are living beyond our means, Herman!' exclaims Editha. 'Why did you not tell me this sooner? I will do anything for you—economise in any way you like—send away one of the servants, or two even—remove to a smaller house.'

'My dearest, I don't want to tell the world just yet that I am a failure. This house suits us to a nicety. Your present cook seems a very decent person. All I have to do is to stick close to my work, and to go on being successful. I shall be afraid even to speak seriously to you, darling, if you take fright so quickly.'

'I am only distressed to think that you should have worked so hard, and that we should have squandered all your earnings upon servants and dinner-parties, carriages and horses. We can get rid of that last expense at any rate, Herman. You bought the carriages and horses to please me. I can do without them very well indeed, dear—so you can sell them as soon as you like.'

'You don't know what you are talking about, love. A man may buy horses and carriages—some people even go so far as to consider that an improvident proceeding—but he can't sell them. That means throwing his money into the gutter.'

'But to get rid of the expense of keeping them, Herman; that would be an advantage, even if you lost ever so much by selling them.'

'When ruin is staring us in the face we'll think of it, dear,' answers Herman carelessly, but with a touch of weariness in tone and manner, like a man who feels himself overweighted in the universal handicap.

It is not from lack of love for wife and child that Herman shrinks from accompanying them to Lochwithian. He has a sense of anxiety which makes him recoil from the idea of rural tranquillity and calm autumn days. He is overworked, and knows it; yet is anxious to write faster than ever—to achieve some striking success, dramatic or literary, in order to be once more in advance of Fortune. He is glad to avoid the risk of friendly and confidential converse with the Squire, who might ask him searching questions about his affairs. A certain irritability, which has been growing upon him of late, seems to find its best solace in the intellectual atmosphere of his club, or Myra's drawing-room, which is only an elegant reduction of club society; the same men, the same subjects of conversation, the same tone of being ever so far in advance of the foremost rank of commonplace humanity.

The thing which he feels most keenly—perhaps the lurking cause of his fretfulness and discontent—is that invention begins to flag, or even to fail. The crowd of images, the wealth of incident, the variety of subject, which used to throng the chambers of his mind, inhabit there no longer. He is obliged to resort to other men's invention for suggestions that may assist his wearied fancy, and with this view reads innumerable French and German novels, in most of which he finds agreeable varieties of stories that have been told a hundred times before, and in the residue no stories at all. Seldom now can he give himself up to the study of tho:

masters of style whose imperishable works used to be the delight of his leisure. Actual leisure he has none, and his days of absolute weariness and exhaustion he employs in groping for some available notion in the kennels of continental fiction—a novel which he can condense and crystallise into a drama, or a drama which he can develop and widen into a novel. This sense of the absolute need of incessant work is his excuse to himself for letting Editha pay her home visit alone. That pained and disappointed look of hers haunts him long after his announcement of this intention, but it does not induce him to alter his plans.

So Editha leaves the gray old church on this late summer evening more out of spirits than she has felt for a long time. All through the bright busy London season, when her husband has spent so much of his time away from her, she has looked forward to the autumn visit to Lochwithian, consoling herself with that sweet home picture of the idle days they are to spend together in the fair harvest month. She has spanned the gulf between the dreary present and the happy future with hope's golden bridge, as the sea-king in the old German ballad bridged over the waters that severed him from his earth-born love. Thus the disappointment is more bitter even than disappointment is wont to be, and all through this evening's sermon, in the fading summer light, she has been taking a despondent view of life, and agreeing heartily with the preacher, who quotes the wise saying of Sir Thomas Brown's to the effect that this world is not an inn, but a hospital.

Alone in the declining light she leaves the old church and returns to the home which seems so empty without Herman. He is dining at Mrs. Brandreth's, where he is to meet some new star in the literary heaven—an American poet, whose wild strong verse has caught the English ear with its rough music. She might have gone with him, she knows, had she so chosen, and can therefore hardly consider his absence an unkindness. Yet she feels that the early sweetness of their wedded life is gone, and that she can scarcely be first in her husband's thoughts when he holds it too great a sacrifice to give up a Sunday dinner-party for her sake. She makes her sacrifice uncomplainingly for the sake of principle, for the faith in which she has been brought up, whose simple rules and ordinances seem puritanical to Herman's easy way of thinking. How easy that way is Editha has yet to discover.

A gentleman is waiting at the little gate of Bridge-end House as she approaches—a tall and large gentleman, with dark eyes, and a face which, although not so young as it has been, is still eminently handsome.

'How do you do, Mr. Lyndhurst? Have you been ringing?' Editha asks, as she shakes hands with this evening visitor.

'Two or three times,' replies Lyndhurst carelessly; 'but your

people seem afflicted with temporary deafness. I daresay they are watching the steamers. There's generally one aground for two or three hours on a Sunday evening hereabouts—amusing, rather, for the spectators. The grounded ones usually sing hymns or dance the varsoviana, I believe, to beguile the time. You never heard of the varsoviana, perhaps, Mrs. Westray. It is a dance known in the dark ages, before the Indian Mutiny, and still affected by the lower classes.' And so talking, Mr. Lyndhurst follows Editha into the house, the parlour-maid having been recalled to a consciousness of her duties by this time.

The house has a deserted look on this summer Sabbath evening. The light is dying in the saffron west, and the corners of the room are shadowy.

'Don't ring for lamps on my account, Mrs. Westray,' says Lyndhurst, as Editha lays her hand on the bell. 'This July twilight is delicious.'

'Yes, there is a lovely calmness in this faint gray light,' she answers, seating herself in a low chair in the balcony, which at this season is like a part of the room. 'But it is rather melancholy, at least when one is—'

'Already disposed to sadness?' hazards Lyndhurst.

'I did not quite mean that. When one is alone.'

'True,' he answers gravely. 'Solitude is only tolerable to the man who has nothing to regret. Nay, for the man who does regret there is no such thing as solitude. His loneliness is peopled with phantoms.'

Editha sighs. Her lonely hours have their ghost. They are haunted by the memory of happier days.

'You are thinking of leaving town soon, I suppose?'

'Almost immediately. Baby and I are going to Wales next week, to stay with my father.'

'Baby and you, and baby's papa, of course,' remarks Mr. Lyndhurst, with supreme innocence, having distinctly heard Herman say yesterday at his club that he was too hard at work to take his wife into the country.

'No, I am sorry to say Herman is not able to go with us. He is so anxious about his literary engagements. He has a commission for a new comedy, to be produced early in the winter.'

'For the Frivolity?'

'No. His last piece is likely to run for a year, I believe.'

'He is lucky in having such an actress as Mrs. Brandreth. Wonderful woman; gifted in every way.'

'Yes, she is very clever, and very fascinating.'

'Charming, isn't she? Artificial, of course. She would never have taken such a brilliant position if she were not artificial. And when art is so delightful, why should one languish for nature?'

'She struck me as spontaneous in her acting.'

'Yes, she has her sudden flashes of passion, like Edmund Kean. At underlying all that seems spontaneous there is a mathematical knowledge of effect. She can calculate the force and pressure of her voice to a hair. Curious that a simple girl, brought up, not amongst books and lamps and sawdust, but in a quiet Devonshire village, should develop into such an artist.'

'Devonshire!' repeats Editha curiously. 'Does Mrs. Brandreth come from Devonshire?'

'Didn't you know that?'

'No, indeed. I had no idea that she was a countrywoman of Mr. Lyndhurst's.'

Lyndhurst looks at her for a few moments thoughtfully, as if he were weighing some question in his mind, and then replies in his most careless tone. He might tell her something about her husband's past which would sting her to the quick; but it strikes him that the time is not yet ripe for him to impart that piece of information. He has his fuse ready, whenever he cares to use it, but is in no hurry to kindle the mine.

'Well, I am not sure that she is a native, but I know she was brought up in the West of England. Are you fond of the drama, Mrs. Westray? Do you like your husband to write for the stage?'

'I like him to be successful in his art,' she answers, 'and to follow the natural bent of his genius. But I sometimes think that he would be happier if he wrote only books. He is too anxious for the success of his plays, too much elated by triumph, too much depressed by failure. A book can afford to wait for praise and recognition, but a play—'

'Assails Fortune like a highwayman, demanding your money or your life,' says Lyndhurst, laughing. 'I always pity the unhappy author on those brilliant first nights, when all intellectual London is on the alert, quite as ready to hiss a defeat as to applaud a success. Your husband must be working rather too hard when he cannot afford himself an autumnal holiday, were it ever so brief.'

'Yes,' answers Editha with a sigh, 'it has been a great disappointment to all of us. I think even baby understands, and is sorry papa is not going into the country with him.'

'Intelligent baby! I suppose the little one is not on view so late in the evening? I should have liked to see what progress he has made since he and I made friends in the early summer.'

Mr. Lyndhurst on one of his friendly visits has been introduced to baby, and has contrived to fascinate that young member of the household. There are men whom children, horses, and dogs are attracted to; not always the best men, perhaps. Is it not rather a question of animal magnetism than superlative virtue, this influence which man exercises over the lesser brutes?

'Baby has been fast asleep for ever so long, I hope. Herman is dining with Mrs. Brandreth, to meet Mr. Molony, the American poet. I wonder you are not there.'

'Mrs. Brandreth was kind enough to ask me, and her Sunday evenings are charming. But there are times when one is not quite in tune with that kind of thing; times when a quiet ramble in the lanes about Wimbledon Common is better than brilliant society and a file-firing of epigrams. I enjoy half-an-hour's quiet chat like this more than the loudest roaring of Mrs. Brandreth's literary lions.'

'It is good of you to enliven my solitude for a little while,' replies Editha, who is really cheered by this friendly talk in the twilight balcony, and whose innocence has no knowledge of Mr. Lyndhurst's evil repute. She knows he is her husband's friend, and accepts that fact as a certificate of character. 'I wonder you do not go to Mrs. Brandreth's for the sake of the music,' she adds. 'Herman tells me there is often first-rate music.'

'Some of the best, doubtless; but do not think me egotistical if I confess that I would rather play one of Beethoven's sonatas to myself, in a half-dark room like this, than hear it performed a great deal better amidst the half-whispered chit-chat of a parcel of people of whom about one in ten knows what is being played, while one in twenty cares about it.'

'You play so well that you can afford to say that.'

'I think I should feel it if I could not play at all. I would hire some half-starved professor—an unappreciated genius—to play Beethoven and Mozart for me between the lights, while I smoked my pipe. Music to the man or woman who cares for it is better than opium-eating. Your true musician sees as many visions as were ever beheld by Coleridge or De Quincey.'

'If he starts with as rich an imagination as Coleridge or De Quincey. A man's own mind must create his dream pictures. Opium or music can only set the machinery in motion.'

'True, Mrs. Westray. In that case I am not without imagination. I know there are times when my fancy is a daring one.'

Something in his tone, which sinks to deeper earnestness with this last sentence, might give the alarm to a woman of the world; but to Editha it conveys nothing beyond the idea that Mr. Lyndhurst has more sentiment, or even romance, in his composition than she has given him credit for.

'It is curious that you should be going to Wales,' he says presently, after a pause, in which they have both looked dreamily at the river.

'Curious that I am going to my father's house!' she exclaims wonderingly.

'Ah, to be sure; I forgot that. I meant that it was curious you should be going to Wales just now. My doctor has ordered me

drink the sulphur water at a place with an odd name—let me see—Llandrysak, I think it is called.'

'That is within ten miles of Lochwithian, my father's place. How curious!'

'Odd, isn't it?'

'Very; but I believe the doctors are beginning to think a good deal of the Llandrysak springs. Herman was sent there for his health three years ago.'

'And it was by that hazard he met you? Happy man to find treasure even greater than health! If every sick Numa could discover such an Egeria at the spring he is sent to, water cure would be your only fashion.'

'I am sorry to hear you are ill enough to be sent to Llandrysak,' says Editha.

'Ill!' he repeats rather vacantly. 'O, it is not absolute illness! Want of tone, the doctors call it; or in other words, a fatal tendency towards old age. However, I expect the Welsh waters to make me young again. May I do myself the pleasure of calling on Mr. Morcombe, since I am to be so near? I have already made his acquaintance, you know, here at a very agreeable dinner-party.'

'Ah, I remember you met papa here. I have no doubt he'll be pleased to see you again,' says Editha, with galling indifference; and then remembering Mr. Lyndhurst's one sublime power, she adds, with more interest, 'I should like to introduce you to my sister, and let her hear you play, if possible. She is an invalid, and rarely finds the pleasure of hearing good music.'

'Except when you play to her.'

'I! O, my powers are very small in that way. I can play just well enough to please and soothe poor Ruth, when there is no better music to be had.'

Evening has deepened into night by this time—summer stars peeping out of the shadowy summer sky; the lights of Putney shining through the river mists; one lazy boat moving gently with the stream, the oars resting in the rullocks, the oarsmen singing softly as they drift. Mr. Lyndhurst feels that to prolong his visit would be an impertinence.

'Good-bye, Mrs. Westray; I'll go and smoke my cigar in the Ambledon laues. At least I won't say good-bye, but *au revoir*, the hope of seeing you at Lochwithian.' And thus they shake hands and part, and it seems to Hamilton Lyndhurst that he is naturally departing out of paradise. Perhaps in the worst men's minds there is some latent capacity for pure feeling, and in the worst men's lives one love which is not all unholy. Or say rather that through these evil natures there flashes an occasional ray of perfect light. They are capable of feeling as tender a reverence for the *unclean* as Faust felt beside Gretchen's pillow, and they are capable of

sinning as Faust sinned against the woman whose purity can move them to tears.

Hamilton Lyndhurst reviews his career that night as he smokes the pipe of contemplation in the Wimbledon lanes, and he tells himself that his life and his character might have been different had he met such a woman as Editha ten years earlier.

'I am the kind of man who must be happy at any price,' he says to himself; 'but happiness would have been none the less sweet to me if I had found it in the paths of virtue. Vice in the abstract has no attraction for me. I have admired and pursued worthless women, knowing them worthless; but I never loved such an one. With me vice has been another name for convenience. Till I saw Westray's wife I never met with a woman worth the sacrifice of matrimony.'

Despite his sentimental talk with Editha of quiet evenings and the pleasures of solitude, there is nothing rarer in Mr. Lyndhurst's life than loneliness and self-inspection. He lives like a wealthy profligate in imperial Rome, surrounded with his little circle of parasites, flatterers, and flute-players. If he is weary or out of spirits, his mountebanks and jesters bring forth their treasures of wit and buffoonery for his diversion, his flute-players pipe their sweetest and smile their brightest to beguile him from thought or sadness. Thus he has hardly time to discover that his life is as foolish as it is worthless; that his evil influence upon others whom his wealth corrupts or his selfishness destroys is even less than his evil influence upon himself.

Of late the flute-players, parasites, and flatterers have found their lord and patron less amusable than of old. He has changed his bosom friend once in six months, instead of once in two years. He has given fewer dinners, has not driven his chosen set to Virginia Water once in the season that is just over, and has displayed unmitigated weariness at those banquets at Greenwich and Richmond which have been eaten at his cost. His team of bays and their attendant grooms have had an easy time of it this year; for, except to put in an appearance at Hyde-Park Corner on field days, Mr. Lyndhurst has made little use of his drag. The mail phaeton, with the tall chestnuts, has been altogether idle, Mr. Lyndhurst spending his leisure for the most part in lounging about his Walham-Green garden, where there is a spacious shrubbery-surrounded lawn, enriched with three of those fine old cedars which are still to be found in this south-western suburb. It is a garden as completely hidden from the outer world as if it were a clearing in the Australian Bush; and here Mr. Lyndhurst, stretched at ease upon the velvet sward, in smoking-jacket and slippers, reads the newspapers, or dozes over a French novel on sultry summer mornings, till it is time to dress and repair to the clubs or the City, where he disposes of his afternoon eit.

leisure or business, winding up with a little dinner at club or restaurant, and finishing his evening in haunts known to his species, and to no other section of humanity.

The flute-players and parasites, perceiving this change in their patron Sardanapalus, lay their heads together and hold counsel as to the cause. The parasites opine that their patron has been losing money; has been hard hit, has come to grief in one of those commercial steeplechases in which the riders make a short cut to wealth through other people's fortunes. The flute-players sigh, and suggest that Mr. Lyndhurst may have fallen in love. The chief parasite laughs, or in his own vernacular screams, at the notion.

'He has been falling in love once in six months or so for the last fifteen years,' says this gentleman; 'and did you ever know his last infatuation put him out of sorts? He is like Bussy Rabutin, he takes the fever lightly. Depend upon it, the source of his gloom is in Lombard-street.'

'Perhaps he is tired of us,' speculates one of the flute-players. 'He is sometimes barely civil, and he forgot to send me the gloves won at Goodwood.'

'A bad sign, no doubt; but if we bored him he would give us our revenge. No man has a more placid way of letting his dear friends know they're out of fashion.'

'True,' sighs the damsel; 'poor Florence Montmorency almost broke her heart at his treatment.'

'She did more,' replies the parasite; 'she put down her brougham.'

Thus argue Mr. Lyndhurst's friends, while the subject of their discourse goes his way, unhappy, yet not altogether hopeless. A man who for fifteen years has commanded all prizes that Fortune can give is hardly to be persuaded, save by the experience of absolute failure, that life holds anything quite out of his reach. Hamilton Lyndhurst is the outcome of a money-making age; an age in which the power of wealth overrides every other potentiality; an age of gold, in which rank and ancient race have dwindled from their place, and have voluntarily cast themselves down before the chariot of a loaded Juggernaut.

Hamilton Lyndhurst is one of those men for whom good luck seems to be an inheritance. Manhood brought him no estate save brains, but he has been what his intimates call 'in the swim' from the very beginning of his career. He is a man who turns all he touches to gold; or who, touching anything not so convertible, lets it go again so quickly as to escape impoverishment from the contact. He is in and out of a hazardous speculation before the general public have quite made up their minds about it; but to whatever dismal depth of discount the shares in that speculation eventually descend, they are sure to be above par just in that halcyon week when Mr. Lyndhurst sells out. Touch and go has been the ruling principle of

all his operations. He is the Proteus of the Stock Exchange, and those who know him best, and regulate their own ventures by his genius, may have some idea of his operations to-day, but cannot venture a guess as to his transactions to-morrow. And thus, having ridden on the shoulders of Fortune as on a horse; having been lucky himself, and the source of luck in others; having been flattered, followed, and caressed from youth to middle age, never having encountered the mind which his wealth could not influence, or the rectitude which it could not corrupt, the idea of failure in any enterprise he may undertake, however wicked or however perilous, finds no place in Hamilton Lyndhurst's thoughts. He sees Editha Westray the devoted wife of another man, and, undaunted, unabashed by her purity, tells himself that she is just the one woman who could redeem his own existence from vapid profligacy and stale pleasures, and open for him the gates of that unknown world of placid domesticity which, seen from afar, seems to him the wearied profligate's natural haven of rest. He tells himself furthermore that there is no legal process in the land more common than the loosening of marriage bonds, and sets himself to consider by what concatenation of events Editha might be divorced from the husband who so poorly appreciates her peerless worth, and be rendered free to bless the man who knows her value.

Mr. Lyndhurst has seen Herman at Mrs. Brandreth's very often of late, has observed their confidential converse, which may or may not be flirtation, but which assuredly has a sentimental air. Those evenings spent in Myra's drawing-room appear to Mr. Lyndhurst an evidence of Herman's weariness at home. The golden days are over: the husband finds another woman more amusing than his wife, and that other the woman he once loved. Lyndhurst has had the secret of that early attachment from Myra's own lips, in one of those fits of despair in which a woman must have a confidant, however dangerous.

Unhappily, no sin of Herman's—were he to exuberate from foolishness into sin—would loosen the legal tie. He is not likely to assail his wife to the endangerment of life or limb in the presence of witnesses, and only by absolute cruelty can he forfeit the right to be, by law, her husband. On this side Mr. Lyndhurst sees no hope. But the wife, by one rash act, by one fatal unpremeditated step, by folly that should look like sin—nay, with perfect innocence of act and intention, betrayed into some false position by the treachery of others, netted and trapped like a snared bird—might snap the chain which a masculine legislature has contrived to make so brittle for woman, so strong for man.

Dark and cloudy are Hamilton Lyndhurst's ideas at present; vague and shadowy the visions of his head upon his bed. But Editha's is the one image that occupies his reveries and haunts his dreams, and all his thoughts tend one way.

It is just possible that he might have ceased to think of one whose purity and fidelity would seem to place her in a region beyond the hopes of the most audacious dreamer if his thoughts had been allowed to follow their own bent, uninfluenced by subtle suggestions from another. True that he is a bold bad man; a man who has said to himself with Satan, 'Evil, be thou my good'; a man who believes in nothing, hopes for nothing, fears nothing, beyond this imperceptible spot upon the face of nature which we call the world. Yet even the most unscrupulous sinner recoils before the beauty of absolute purity, and Hamilton Lyndhurst might have reconciled himself to the fact that here was one woman utterly beyond reach of temptation, had he not been stimulated to hopefulness by the voice of the tempter.

The tempter speaks in the accents of Myra Brandreth, who takes care to inform Mr. Lyndhurst from time to time of Herman's moral deterioration; how he has grown weary of domesticity already, and is never so happy as when away from home; how Mrs. Westray is evidently—a useful word, and of widest significance, that evidently—unappreciated and neglected. A pity; so young and lovely a creature; but rather dull, Mrs. Brandreth opines, and hardly a fitting companion for Herman.

'You ought to have married him,' says Mr. Lyndhurst.

Myra sighs.

'I think we should have suited each other,' she answers, with placid melancholy.

As one confidence deserves another, Mr. Lyndhurst lets her into the secret of his intense admiration for Mrs. Westray. He describes that feeling as a sentiment of exquisite purity, the worship of some bright particular star, rather than admiration of another man's wife. Myra sympathises abundantly, and is all the more sorry for Mr. Lyndhurst's hopeless passion because the lady who inspires it is so unhappy in her union with Herman Westray.

'A literary man should never marry at all,' says Mrs. Brandreth conclusively. 'He is too self-absorbed, too dependent on the sunshine of the hour, to make a good husband. Or if he must marry, he should at least choose a wife who can help him in his art.'

'As you help Westray,' suggests Lyndhurst, with his subtle smile. 'However dear his wife may be to him as the sharer of his home, you are the partner of his dramatic successes, and have exercised the greater influence on his career.'

Myra sighs again, a deprecating sigh this time, as if she would fain dispute the statement were it not so obviously true. And thus, the subject of conversation between two utterly unscrupulous people, who have never acknowledged any higher law than their own inclinations, Editha may be said to walk blindfold in paths of danger.

OXFORD RAFFLES

No. III.

SOME one or other—it does not signify who—remarked that the child is father of the man. He may have meant by this solemn platitude that the instincts of childhood are those of mature years, only an embryo; and perchance, as our lively neighbours across the silver streak of sea-sickness put it, he had reason. I confess, however, that I should prefer slightly to invert the above wiseacre's maxim, and hazard the assertion that men are after all but grown-up children; largely infantine; nothing more. For this reason. Just as lovely woman worships but one ideal—her dress, and owns but one bagiology—her wardrobe, and one reliquary—her jewel-case, so man, the matured child, exhibits an almost babyish devotion to toys.

'Toys!' you echo. 'What can the fellow be thinking about?' I reply in the language of the Scotch rhymers:

'Boots, quo' he; ay, boots, quo' she!
Ye auld blind blinking body,' &c.

—which, by the way, is rather hot for my objector, not to say vituperative. Strong convictions, however, sometimes evoke muscularity of diction. Mankind, I repeat at the risk of flat contradiction, are quite as spoony on their toys as ever was little girl in the nursery on a wax doll, whose azure eyes, if you pulled a trigger somewhere in the abdominal region, would turn up like the typical duck in the thunderstorm, or indeed, by violent exertitation of the said trigger, totally collapse.

The question arises, what do I mean by toys? Suffer me to reply with Oriental circumlocution. We will take the case of Jones—Gell Jones, or Gelatinous Jones he used to be called at Eton, by reason of certain carnal peculiarities. Well, Jones, with ten thousand per annum, spends at least nine-ninths of his entire rent-roll on quadrupeds. Smith, again, with double that income, and a mighty magnificent position in society to boot, lives, moves, breathes—one might almost say perspires—only in his yacht. That eminent craft, yeleft the Cretian, won a cup, or a pot, or a purse, on some occasion or other, and ever since then her illustrious skipper, Smith, has dreamt of naught else. Brown, on the other hand, who never in his life crossed a quadruped's back, and would shiver at the bare thought of a voyage from Cowes to Ryde, being of a practical and philanthropic turn, gives his whole soul to sewage. If you dine with him, he insists on your tasting his water, which certainly looks crystalline.

Whereupon, after you have gulped down a quarter of a pint out of compliment, he gives you his word of honour that every drop of it was extracted from a cesspool by his patent process. The thought that he is a man of scrupulous truthfulness is not reassuring. At such a moment you are disposed to value mendacity as the chiefest of virtues. You may indeed try to hug a paradoxical belief that some patentees hesitate not to perpetrate sham miracles in order to prove the accuracy of their inventions. But, no. Later on in the evening, when Brown has become emboldened owing to the absorption of claret and champagne, you overhear a strange pedal-pipe obligato accompaniment to 'I would that my Love,' which is being rolled forth by the female Browns. It is the voice of their father painfully explaining his patent process to deaf old Lady Stickington, who doesn't quite know whether the polite thing under these trying circumstances is to be charmed or horrified.

Now, not to be prolix, I maintain stoutly that these three citizens of credit and renown are nothing better than three small boys. Jones, at the tender age of six, used to ride his hobby-horse; Smith was addicted to sailing small craft in a pond; whilst Brown dearly loved the manufacture on the sly of little dirt-pies. Each still pursues his favourite toy as the one *summum bonum* worth living for; with this difference—that whereas in childhood the excessive affection for a plaything would evoke a rebuke from some superior pragmatical female in temporary nursery authority, any amount of blind stupidity in regard of horses, yachts, and sewage will insure in after life the encomiums of Mrs. Grundy, and may end in the proprietor of the infatuation being seriously testimonialled.

Of all places where toys for the adult are most plentiful, commend me to old Oxford. For instance, the Rev. Dr. Silenus, whose patience can only be compared to a vat, is by his college supplied liberally with two favourite playthings—poor innocent babe!—to wit, brown sherry and vintage port. I won't mention Oxford fives-balls, racket-bats, cricket paraphernalia, oars, and punt-poles; since these, together with billiard-cues and illustrated pasteboard, are veritable adjuncts of the playground. But I may enumerate, among other toys much in vogue, books collected, to be sold after the demise of the buyer by auction, for the benefit of rapacious heirs-at-law; choister boys petted like princes of the blood until incipient manhood, and then too often, just as old Derby favourites are now and again consigned to the cab-rank, discarded by their admirers to flounder helplessly through the mud of real life; and last, not least, ecclesiastical millinery and antiquities, which simply entrance and engross the amateur who makes them his study and delight.

Such a being was Mr. Orphrey of St. Swithin's. Vulgar people would dub him ruthlessly a Ritualist. I have no desire, however, to overstep the decent line which separates commonplace narrative from

a pure sentiment. In any case, why grudge certain hard-priests the small luxury of their serious toys by way of relaxation long hours of labour in the slums and in the hot and fetid the sick and dirty?

But we are digressing from Mr. Orphrey to Mr. Orphrey. As for that gentleman, his dabbling with priestly toys could be regarded as erratic, having no *raison d'être*, since he happened to be a mere undergrad.; not by any means a presbyter, not even as a deacon. To explain. Bitten with the ecclesiastical itch, Mr. Orphrey in his impatience could not wait for the ceremony of ordination, but lashed out into tremendous expenditure of 'functions' whilst yet *in statu pupillari*. The enthusiastic man's bedroom became transmogrified into an oratory, with correct accessories in accordance with the use of Sarum. As a sitting-room, it was simply levitical. After opening the door, you had to grope your way through a curtain of Utrecht velvet, patterned to represent arras. Crucifixes, prie-dieus, Glastonbury pyxes, Overbeckian prints, Puginesque hangings, Hardman and Skidmorian iron work, Munich statuary, and Oxford woodwork—the chefs-d'œuvre, by the bye, of those really brilliant Margetts and Chapman; a Scudamorian organ or so, whereon you could symphonically a tractate in black letter on Helmorian Gregorian casual fald-stool; and some rush-bottomed chairs warranted excruciatingly—these, and other items of a similar sort, made up the appointments of Mr. Orphrey's rooms, which were mediæval in all conscience to make a monk dance a breakdown for ver-

The above 'properties,' however, were but little compared with the wonderful garments concealed in a cupboard

must add that a report spread abroad to the effect that the amiable enthusiast, in all the blind fervour of ingenuous youth, was known to have put on his polychromatic clothing hind before. That, however, was no doubt mere pitiful scandal borrowed from 'Ye Rhime of Saynte Bryanne O'Lynne,' a party who, as the world believes, inverted a sheepskin illogically during the prevalence of extreme cold.

Now it is a truth, and a sad truth, worthy perhaps the digestion of some who attach greater importance to man millinery than to human suffering, that ecclesiastical art is by far too beautiful to be cheap. I confess to a slight scepticism as to the moral worth of chasubles *et ad genus omne*; but to their genuine loveliness I will testify heart-wholly, whilst, *experto crede*, I am fully cognisant of their costliness. It came to pass therefore that our friend Mr. Orphrey, when bills showered in like hailstones, found to his abject horror that he had overrun the constable to the tune of five hundred pounds.

This arithmetical truism was indeed appalling; chiefly because his relatives, being a set of charitable souls who respected Foxe's Martyrology and despised the Fathers, who in one word were rabid Puritans and frantic fanatics, would have rushed pèle-mêle to the nearest lunatic asylum and resigned themselves cheerfully to a strait-waistcoat, did they but suspect the little game their young hopeful had been playing. He could not appeal to them for funds to discharge his various liabilities; not he. It would have been worse than useless, positively mischievous. He had indeed already received a terrible fright, owing to the skittishness of his bosom friend, Mr. Reredos, which made him, by the way, doubly cautious. It happened on this wise: Mr. Reredos entertained a sardonic feeling of chronic exasperation against the editor of the London *Discord*, a reputable print of an ultra-puritanical cast. It occurred one fine day to the inventive genius of this young hopeful that it would not be bad fun to hoax his pet detestation. Accordingly, after carefully composing some doggrel verses breathing a spirit of Mariolatry so violent that they certainly could have been placed upon the Index if ever they had journeyed as far as Rome, he indited a verbose epistle to the editor of the *Discord* describing with cruel exactitude one of Mr. Orphrey's functions, and in an assumed vein of Protestant indignation calling especial attention to his own jangling words, which he affirmed formed a sort of *canto fermo* to the whole business. Need it be added that the *Discord* jumped at so paying a sensation, and not only inserted every line of Mr. Reredos' highly-spiced account, but farther commented upon Oxford as a cento of abomination, and implored its readers to send their sons to Dublin University, or else keep them rattled up at home? Mr. Reredos had prudently—shall I say jesuitically?—addressed the editor of the *Discord* under a false name, and had also located his horrible scene of amateur Popery in another college than St. Swithin's; nevertheless it made Mr. Orphrey shiver,

lest the wild excitement which prevailed in consequence of the rage and fury of the *Discord* should turn popular suspicion against himself as a delinquent; so much so that he was much too terrified to join in the peals of laughter which issued from the sides of Mr. Reredos as he recited, with intense satisfaction, specimens of passion in fatters aired alike by the entire staff of the *Discord* newspaper and its numerous correspondents.

'What is to be done, my dyarrest Dens?' murmured the afflicted undergrad. in his usual monotone, addressing, I must add, his friend Mr. Reredos by his Christian name.

'I cannot by any stretch of the faculty of imagination elucidate your problem, my dyarrest Orphrey,' was the glib reply.

'I—I don't like to part with the various items I cannot pay for,' faltered Mr. Orphrey, 'because, you see, they might be consigned to secular uses.'

'The sacrilege of Belshazzar!' echoed his friend sympathetically.

'And yet—and yet, my dyarrest Dens,' muttered Mr. Orphrey, with a very elongated visage, 'I don't see my way out of the wood. The matter has progressed to its penultimate stage. In fact—to volunteer a plenary confession—I have learnt an important lesson in the philosophy of credit. Your tradesman begins by forwarding his little account of a yard long, terminated by a total in two or three figures. This infernal thumbscrew he designates "*Your esteemed favour.*" That is the grovelling phase; and like most other things of beauty it is evanescent. A reminder soon follows in the shape of "*To bill delivered,*" whereof the real harshness is veiled by a bland supplication for "*farther orders.*" The next step is a very humble request for a payment on account of your terrifying total, which by some inexplicable multiplying process has already waxed a few pounds and shillings. This application you may consider the crisis, inasmuch as all subsequent communications are couched in language more or less impudent. Your creditor is primarily surprised, secondly minatory, thirdly vindictive. You are then handed over to the tender mercies of Messrs. Gryppe and Skynne, whose minion takes up his abode outside your door; and, lastly, you are served with a writ in the Vice-Chancellor's Court. That, I regret to add, my dyarrest Dens, is the hard fate at this very moment of one Ambrose Orphrey of St. Swithin's.'

My dyarrest Dens Reredos looked very much like Eliphaz the Temanite after he had swallowed a cruet of vinegar—in a word, a sorry Job's comforter.

'You are not suggestive,' growled Mr. Orphrey testily.

'*Ex nihilo nihil fit,*' observed his friend, with a miserable attempt at a saccharine smile. 'If I were in your position at the present moment, I'd—'

'Well, Reredos, out with it.'

'I'd cut the knot of my difficulties by raffling the whole blessed lot.'

'Reredos!' exclaimed Mr. Orphrey loftily; 'I'm surprised at your levity!'

'Pooh!' retorted my dyarrest almost contemptuously; 'you'll be a deal more surprised if Gryppe and Skynne get a judgment against you in the Vice-Chancellor's Court.'

No logic could have proved more unanswerable. The terrible tribunal presided over by the Vice-Chancellor possesses powers almost unlimited. It can not only imprison, fine, and distrain, but, worse still, rusticate and expel. To avoid the jaws of such a monster any sacrifice appeared tolerable, even an iconoclasm of the most cherished of sentimentalities.

Accordingly the columns of the *Church Times* and *Church Review* announced that a raffle would take place, in Smug's Auction-rooms, Oxford, of certain articles of millinery, furniture, and art, duly specified. Tickets, to the number of five hundred, one guinea each. The prizes, all told, amounted to fifty only. But then, were they not prizes indeed!

Now, as we are already aware, St. Swithin's College contained within its walls not only such amiable mediævalists as Messrs. Orphrey and Reredos, but also the magnificent Pompone and the light-hearted Temperly, the absorbent Rapax and the festive Bumpus. To these gentlemen, one and all, the prospect of a mediæval raffle seemed fraught with possible amusement.

About this time Mr. Pompone, having paid a considerable fee, had been initiated into some surprisingly tall degree in freemasonry, and thereby had acquired the prescriptive right of dressing up in the costume of King Richard I. The stage properties requisite to convert a modern English gentleman into a Crusader having been ordered and duly delivered, Mr. Pompone invited a select few of his friends to inspect his handsome person in its new and, to do him justice, highly-picturesque guise.

The verdict was unanimous—superb!

Mr. Pompone, taking up a position on the hearth-rug, surveyed himself in the glass with sublime satisfaction. In the judgment of his peers he entirely concurred.

'D'haw,' he remarked, stroking his decidedly crusading moustache, 'what do you think of my diamonds?'

'Diamonds!' cried Mr. Bumpus, surveying scornfully certain so-called jewels which were let into these vestments of knighthood.

'Exactly,' replied Mr. Pompone, as he perceived a cloud of doubt rise on his friends' admiring countenances. 'They're f'hamily diamonds.'

'They may be *family* diamonds,' retorted waspish Mr. Bumpus, 'but they're not diamonds!'

'D'haw, exaactly,' replied the imperturbable Mr. Pompone, lighting a cigar. 'Have some champagne.'

As he spoke his finger pointed majestically to a glass barrel placed on a bracket in the corner of his room, under the tap whereof was stationed ready, ay ready, a tumbler. The barrel in question, at a guess, might hold a maximum of six magnums. It was full. The eyes of Mr. Rapax gleamed.

'Don't be shy, Temperly,' he exclaimed, in a charmingly reassuring tone, promptly tossing off his good half-pint of that seductive fluid.

'I call this machine the ne plus ultra of fizzical science,' observed that gentleman in response, as he took to the gift of the gods quite lovingly.

'D'haw, Temperly, bestial!' ejaculated Mr. Pompone, who objected to any one punning in his presence except himself. 'I borrowed the idea from long Skittleton of the Guards.'

'Borrowed or not borrowed,' rejoined Mr. Bumpus, 'it assuredly pays.'

'Exaactly,' continued Mr. Pompone, with a passing glance of contempt at Mr. Bumpus. 'Skittleton is about the l'hatitude of an average worm. I mean, of course, in proportion to his l'hongitude. That, I suppose, is the reason why his constitution is so excessively thirsty; because his l'hiquors have to travel a considerable distance before they get c'homfortably settled. However independent of n'atural causes, he invented that barrel in order to insure a constant supply to an ever-recurring demand.'

'I give it up,' observed Mr. Bumpus, looking mystified.

'In this way,' proceeded Mr. Pompone, disregarding the interruption. 'Skittleton lies flat on his back on the sofa with the tap inserted in his mouth. Then he issues the strictest orders to his fl'hunkey to turn it on, and on no account to stop until he hears a gurgling noise in his throat.'

'In that case,' remarked Mr. Rapax, 'I think, with your kind permission, Pompone, I *will* take just one more sip.'

'By all means,' responded the hospitable Mr. Pompone. 'Pray lap, gentlemen. To revert, however, to s'ubject of the costume in which I have the honour to appear, it has raised a so'herious question in my mind.'

'Give it a name,' burst from the lips of all present.

'Exaactly. I'll come at once to the point; a ch'oice of professions is offered me. I can either go into the Ch'urch or the Guards.'

'Hardly a choice,' suggested Mr. Bumpus; 'the Church hasn't even a club of its own.'

'*O que j'aime les militaires*,' smirked Mr. Temperly.

'If it's a mere matter of grub—' commenced Mr. Rapax.

'D'haw,' interrupted Mr. Pompone, 'you've none of y'

it u'hail on the head. It's a simple que'hestion of which uniform is me best.'

'Hah, just so!' hazarded Mr. Bumpus, not precisely catching drift.

'No doubt about it,' observed Mr. Temperly sagely, determined to be on the right side.

'An *embarras de richesses*,' volunteered judicious Mr. Rapax, inhibiting farther playfulness in the direction of the champagne tap divertively, however.

'You see,' added Mr. Pompone, with solemn earnestness, 'the use of the Guards is that the privates are so uncommonly well doomed, not to speak of their g'horgeous array, as almost—ahum—to eclipse the officers. Now, in the Ch'urch, assuming as a matter of course that one is a rihitualist, a chahasuble is—ahum—both impressive and becoming.'

'That's all very fine,' interposed Mr. Temperly, 'but you don't enlist in the army for everlasting; whereas in the Church—'

'There's the alternative of Monsignor Capel,' suggested Mr. Bumpus knowingly.

'Or the Shakers,' added Mr. Temperly. 'You can always get rid of parsonic disabilities by devoting your toes to Terpsichore.'

'Exactly,' gurgled forth Mr. Pompone, with that ponderous solemnity with which he ever approached a paradox. 'But we are pressing from the quehestion of uniform (don't laugh, Temperly; fellow's future cannot be regarded as quite ridiculous). However, as I was about to remark, Orphrey is going to raffle a lot of ritualistic vestments. I've put in, and I suppose you fellows have the same. Now what I wish is to strike a b'hargain to this effect: If you, gentlemen, will agree, in the event of either of you falling off a chahasuble, to hand it over to me, I'll guarantee, in the event of my winning a prize which is not a chahasuble, to surrender to be raffled between yourselves. Is that a b'hargain?'

'Right you are,' responded Mr. Temperly; 'but I say, Pom, old y, what the dickens do you want with a chasuble?'

'That's my affair,' was the mysterious answer to this intrusive question.

For Mr. Orphrey's raffle, in spite of advertising, canvassing, and almost superhuman efforts of Mr. Dens Reredos, but one hundred and forty-nine tickets out of five hundred were subscribed. Nevertheless, inasmuch as something would have to be paid in order to pay the wolfish appetite of importunate creditors, it was deemed advisable not to return the moneys in hand, but to run the risk of losing something like a thousand pounds worth of ritualistic effects in preference to the certainty of a judgment in the Vice-Chancellor's court. Mr. Orphrey, it is true, groaned in spirit. Nevertheless he

consolated himself with the reflection that after all he was holder of no less than three hundred and fifty-one chances against the one hundred and forty-nine purchased by the public; and therefore, by every maxim of probability, he ought to win at least half the prizes, if not more. This thought nerved him to see the matter through to the bitter end.

He met with average luck. To his own tickets fell about two-thirds of the numerous nicknackeries; one reverse, however, cut him to the quick. He failed to win one single chasuble: and these embroidered vestments were indeed the deities nearest his heart. Above all, as a sort of climax of impropriety, a real beauty which had been especially imported for him from a Belgian convent became the property of Erastian Mr. Rapax, a circumstance which caused Orphrey's outraged ecclesiastical sensibilities to ooze forth lachrymously. Cinqbars of Christ Church could not have moaned more plaintively the loss of his favourite Badger, which in its brief existence had earned a hundred pounds in honest wagers, had mortally wounded several dogs, and, over and above covering its proprietor with glory, had removed a fraction of his right arm.

'Hullo, R'hapax,' exclaimed the *lasso expressivo* of Mr. Pomponé, 'I congratulate you. That chahasuble you have la'handed is, I believe, mine.'

Mr. Rapax, whose bump of acquisitiveness was largely developed, looked just a little blue. You see that Mr. Pomponé had not won a prize; consequently, in accordance with the agreement previously entered into, the winner had won but to lose.

'I imagined you were going to let me off,' he observed, the wish being father to the thought.

'A b'hargain is a b'hargain,' oracularly responded Mr. Pomponé. 'However, Rapax, not to press too hard upon you, I'll recoup you the expense of your raffle ticket.'

Mr. Rapax *tried* to smile.

'And what's more,' continued Mr. Pomponé, 'I'll stand a regular stiff feed at the Mitre. None of your chops and omelettes, but the entire *gourmandise*—real turtle, a cut of the neck of venison, an ortolan, an ice-pudding, and a marrow-bone to top up with; drinks to fit, and a free billiard-table afterwards.'

Mr. Rapax *did* smile.

From henceforth the question in everybody's mouth was, 'What will he do with it?' If you met twenty men in the brief space of half an hour, after the usual British growl anent the barometer that it was beatifically hot, cold, wet, or dry, the stereotyped exclamation would be, 'I say, can you tell me what Pomponé's little game with that chasuble is?' Whereunto you could only respond that, in the absence of material whereon to build a bet, your mind was an idiotic blank.

This riddle Mr. Pompone at length condescended to solve in the following form :

'Mr. Pompone requests the honour of your company on Wednesday next, at half-past eight p.m., in the Holywell Music-room. Charades—dancing.'

In plain English, this very gallant young gentleman had organised for the delectation of the Oxford young ladies of his acquaintance—ad, in consideration of his length of limb and purse, they were legionary—an evening's jollification. I use the word advisedly, for whatever Mr. Pompone did was thorough. He never asked any Christian of either sex to sit down to the deleterious vintages of Gottgutesheimer. He would have reckoned it mere barefaced effrontery to invite any reputable people to a stand-up supper of saw-dusty sandwiches and sour negus. In short, he desired his guests, after the fashion of the month of March, to come in like lambs and to out like lions; to grow by pleasant stages from dwarfs into giants, from giants into giants refreshed with wine.

Yet—to be truthful—this sudden gush of colossal hospitality was not altogether on account of the bright eyes, fair epidermis, and golden hair of Oxford maidenhood. There existed a strong motive power in the background—to wit, a buxom mamma and two socratic daughters thereof, Miss Dody and Miss Lulu, who were about to descend upon Oxford for the especial purpose of lending grace to Mr. Pompone's party, and for whom the aforesaid congregation was to be collected. There was generally a method in Mr. Pompone's madness, and a very large-hearted, beneficent, and agreeable style of method it was; one, too, which, so far as I am personally concerned, should like to see universal in whatever corner of the globe I may happen to be located.

No doubt about it. For instance, if *de rigueur* there were tea and coffee for the female contingent as soon as they entered, in a little room, where the band were rosining their bows and lips most gently, you might find all sorts of cheering liquids for the thirsty male. A clever scout—mayhap the ever-faithful Jommies—buttoned every trousered being, detached him from his parasitical petticoats, and despatched him happy to that glory-hole of Bacchus, from whence he issued shortly, or longly, according to his taste, diant indeed. As for the musicians, they got so very pleasant before ever a chord was struck as to exhibit signs of leap-frog and ear-fighting, until they were checked by a single 'exactly' from the pep pedal-pipes of a too liberal host, which reduced the lot at once to their ordinary level of catgut and brass.

The company having assembled, and imbibed their preliminary refreshment, charades were announced, and Mr. Pompone, leaving the duties of hospitality to be temporarily discharged by his active catenant, Mr. Temperly, disappeared; and within a few minutes

the band struck up the overture to *Masaniello*, whilst all eyes were directed towards the stage.

The dressing part of the business did not occupy a long time: at the conclusion of the overture the curtain drew up, disclosing Mr. Pomponé in the resplendent uniform of a private in the Life Guards, and pacing up and down sentry-wise, as one to the manner born.

To him enters a little ragged street urchin—one of the choir-boys of St. Swithin's College chapel—whereupon the band strike up the accompaniment to Bishop's immortal 'Bid me discourse,' which the youngster trolls forth splendidly, receiving in return that ovation a fine boy singer can always extract from women, who would give their eyes for his quantity and quality of voice, his time and tune, his perfect *aplomb*, and capability of reading at sight. The applause having subsided, the ragged songster, assuming an air of perfect impudence, turns to Mr. Pomponé, and inquires 'how it feels a-top of all that padding;' upon which saucy utterance the curtain falls, and the orchestra, to insure prolixity, strike up a set of quadrilles.

There is a good bit of pushing and shoving behind the curtain, from which circumstance the audience are able to infer that something out of the common is *in prospectu*. The music also, wearisome as it is in its washy quadrillishness, comes to an end too soon. Whereupon a tip is given to the leader, who strikes up Mendelssohn's 'Wedding March,' in the middle whereof the curtain rises upon a *tableau* truly striking.

By levying a contribution on Mr. Orphrey's ecclesiastical paraphernalia, which had been scattered throughout St. Swithin's College and the University, Mr. Pomponé had contrived to fit up quite a gorgeous and eminently correct ritualistic altar with flowers, candles, and all the etceteras. In front of this imposing piece of furniture, still more imposing himself he appeared clad in alb, chasuble, stole, biretta, and all the other properties. In front of him knelt a gentleman, in fact Mr. Bumpus, and a lady attired to perfection as a bride, and attended by a bevy of bridesmaids. To the right and left were stationed the choir-boys of St. Swithin's quite romanesqued in scarlet cassocks, whilst a thurifer appeared swinging incense with frantic vigour. Mr. Pomponé, having with magnificent dignity placed the hand of the aforesaid Mr. Bumpus in that of the young lady, causing that gentleman rather thrilling sensations, raised solemnly a brace of fingers in the air, suggestive rather of hailing a distant cab, but intended to represent the donation of his benediction. After which, the choir bursting into a delicious chorale, the curtain fell for the second time.

'What can the word be?' cried Miss Dody and Miss Lulu's mamma, much interested.

'I should guess "guardsman,"' remarked Miss Dody.

'I can understand "guard,"' retorted Miss Lulu; 'but why

"man"? Surely at a wedding the man is a very secondary consideration.'

'Hush, my dear,' frowned mamma. 'Such a sentiment may be true, but it is hardly good breeding.'

'Why,' cried Miss Dody as the band, which had been fiddling vehemently a medley of popular airs, suddenly pulled up sharp in the middle of 'It's a way we have in the 'Varsity—' 'why—if—no—why—what!'

Well might her little tongue ejaculate; well might her little brain whirl with surprise. Alone upon the stage stood the great and magnificent Pompone himself, quite serious, attired in his ordinary evening dress, only that in him the principle of *desinit in pacem mulier formosa superne* was inverted. It was not his understandings which were piscose, but his upper story.

He had tired his head with a gigantesque *chevelure*; and in this guise, signalling to his faithful orchestra for music, commenced a dignified and solemn breakdown. The company could not help laughing. The performance was eminently silly, but so for the matter of that is all burlesque. Moralising apart, suffice it that our Corypheus, charmed at having opened the mouths of his numerous friends from ear to ear, set to work in good earnest, regardless of perspiration and the waste of tissue, and had quite succeeded, not only in kicking much dust out of the boards, but also in convincing every one of his agility, when, in the midst of his frantic efforts to convert his right leg into a pivot whereupon to rotate his whole trunk, the hair-pins which attached the *chevelure* to his short-topped poll without warning loosened, and the inert mass of Russian hair shot off at right angles, and deposited itself at the feet of the mamma of Miss Dody and Miss Lulu. This was the climax. Amidst complete storm of applause the curtain fell with a flop.

'It can't be "guardsman,"' remarked Miss Dody.

'Shall I tell you what I think it is?' said her sister, glancing mischievously at the young lady's *coiffure*, which, *entre nous*, might have been a trifle less demonstrative without violating any known canon of good taste.

'Whisper it, Lulu,' was the cat-like reply.

'It's "Topknot,"' hissed forth the young lady. 'Rather a broad hint, don't you think so, all surrounding circumstances considered?'

'Nonsense, Lulu,' was the muttered response.

Miss Lulu, however, was right; and I really think that if Mr. Pompone had not judgmatically turned on at that crisis a smart tap of sparkling fluids, more than one female in the room would have been quite prepared to hatch up an offence, where assuredly none was designed, or indeed dreamt of, by the unconscious offender.

The tap, however, set matters quite smooth. Soon a posse of

muscular undergrads. cleared the decks for action. Dowagers were promptly reduced to sedent whistiness, whilst those among them who believed in the peccability of pasteboard devices improved the shining hour by picking holes in their neighbours' characters, and edified each other's souls with good strong pungent scandal.

With the exhilarating music of the *Generiève de Brabant* waltzes fantastic toes were easily brought into accord. The old damp room where Handel's rhythmical ponderosities used to be performed, under the style of 'ancient concerts,' became mazier and mazier. The girls' spirits rose, and all declared that a more wildly jolly evening was not likely to be spent in proper ecclesiastical Oxford for many a term. There was one wallflower, and one only. Mr. Rapax could eat, drink, smoke, chaff, and construe Thucydides, but he never yet had tried to gyrate either on a partner's toes or on ice. Skating and dancing were not in the list of his accomplishments.

To him, winded after a delicious whirl with Miss Lulu, advanced Mr. Temperly, beaming beautifully.

'Well, old boy,' said that gentleman, 'now we know why that mysterious animal Pompone made such desperate running on chasubles.'

'No doubt about it,' yawned Mr. Rapax, who was devoutly anticipating supper. 'Old Pom didn't, however, behave exactly shabbily. He stood a supernacular feed at the Mitre—turtle, whitebait, marrow-patties—everything. Thank the pigs, for once in my life I ate too much.' This with a long-drawn sigh of infinite satisfaction.

These wiseacres, I must add, were not quite right in their conjecture, as will appear from the following dialogue.

Mr. Pompone and Miss Dody had been dancing to the verge of fatigue, and were now in that delightful condition which can only be described as the acme of mutual satisfaction. Their eyes were riveted on each other with something approaching odic force. They looked like a brace of principals in the farce of *Love's Young Dream*.

'D'haw,' murmured Mr. Pompone, in a dulcet tone pregnant with amorous meaning, 'which uhuniform, do you consider, Miss Dody, the more becoming—the Guardsman's or the chahasuble?'

Miss Dody cast down her big eyes artlessly.

'The Guardsman's,' she faltered, 'is very, very sweet; but the ecclesiastical vestment is—well, simply lovely!'

'Exactly,' replied Mr. Pompone, with decided emphasis. 'That settles the matter. I shall go into the Church.'

Now you know how it came to pass that this magnificent gentleman coveted a chasuble. He wished to test and be guided by Miss Dody's infallibility on a question more or less sartorial. You may smile at him, but he was in his way a fine fellow, and typical withal of a large class, few of whose numbers are blessed with his outspoken honesty in matters of pure vanity.

SECOND CLASS

TIME was when your third-class passenger was the *bête noire* of the railway company. He was the obnoxious person in the fustian jacket, whom the company were driven by Act of Parliament to provide for, but of whom they desired to see as little as possible. Ingenious devices were resorted to, to drive him off the line. His trains started at unearthly hours in the morning, and came in at dismal hours of the night. They were contrived so as to pass the longest time possible in dreary shunts at wretched roadside stations. Every humiliation in the way of bad accommodation and incivility had the unfortunate passenger to endure. He felt himself a worm, and no man, as long as he held one of those wretched little billets that entitled him to conveyance in a parliamentary train. It is said that on some lines the companies have been known to grant free passes to persons whose presence was likely to be offensive to the rest of the passengers—sweeps, and others of cognate dirty illings—and we can well believe it. Did we not see, not very long ago, the following inscription over one of the portals of a well-known terminus on the Surrey side of the water: 'Booking-office for Horses, Dogs, and Third-class Passengers'?

But now your third-class passenger is king. Railway despots are reluctantly opening their eyes to the fact, that if they would retain their power they must govern on democratic principles. The great formula, that it is more advantageous to provide at low fares for the public mass rather than purvey for special wants at high fares, is beginning to be recognised as a truth. One of the most prosperous and best managed of railway companies, the Midland, has already adopted this principle. Mr. Gladstone has pronounced in its favour in reference to the metropolitan traffic. Its adoption over England is now only a matter of time, despite the prejudices of directors.

And the unfortunate second class is doomed to extinction, to disappear from the world unhonoured and regretted, unless, perhaps, by Jeames and the ladies'-maids, who may be horrified at the prospect of having to associate with 'the populace,' or by Barnacles of the *Lucubrador*, who regards its existence as a barrier between himself in the first class and a howling mob of roughs in the third class. And yet in a certain sense the existence of this moribund second class is sempiternal. The cremation of Phoenix II. is the prelude to the installation of Phoenix III.; the king being dead, we

proclaim the new king. From the moment of its disappearance from Bradshaw, of its effacement from the last time-table of the most sluggish line in the kingdom, the second class will spring again into existence, gifted with renewed vitality. If three men are riding a horse, and you knock off the middle one, the one behind becomes number two to all intents and purposes. If there remain only two classes, one of them must be the second. The fact is, we are all to be promoted—all we poor third-class wretches, who have more children than cash, and who come in for more kicks than halfpence. We shall no longer be the third estate; we shall all be raised to the peerage, and own no superiors but the princes who go first class.

How did it come into existence, this triple division of classes, and who is responsible for its application to travelling? Was it modelled after the British constitution of Kings, Lords, and Commons, or did we take a leaf from the castes of India, the Bramans represented in the first class, the Kshatriyas or warriors in the second, and the common rush of people in the third? Perhaps we borrowed the idea from the foreign diligences, where the *coupé*, the *banquette*, and the interior may represent in some fashion the three classes. Certainly there was no corresponding division on our own stage and mail coaches, and the distinction between outside and inside did not involve any social separation. The nobleman perhaps went outside, whilst the bourgeois was snugly boxed inside. No one would think of exacting a first-class seat in an omnibus, and we are thankful to say that hitherto no attempt has been made to create such a distinction in tramway-cars in London, although you find the futile division in France—in the Havre tramways, for instance—otherwise excellent.

Probably, in the minds of the early organisers of railway travelling, there existed an idea that it was necessary to provide for those exclusive individuals who usually travelled post or in their own carriages a similar dignified conveyance, in which they might be fenced off from vulgar contact. The second class, then, was meant for the ordinary travelling public; whilst in answer to the demand for cheaper conveyance for the late outside passengers, open cars were attached to the trains. In these the occupants suffered all the pangs of cold and heat, and wind and rain, as in the old-fashioned coaching-days, with the added delights of showers of burning ashes and clouds of sulphurous smoke, and the choking vaporous air of the dungeon-like tunnels. To these open cars public opinion in time compelled the railway companies to affix roofs, which protected the passengers partly from the rain, but intensified the cold and draughts. To these in slow progression succeeded a carriage entirely closed in, with movable shutters and louver boards, but unglazed, dark and miserable extremely, and yet a great advance. The seats of these cars were longitudinal; they were narrow and high, mere shelves,

in fact ; and the two rows of seats in the middle of the carriage were provided with a low back that effectually prevented any ease of posture. These penitential vans are still in use on some lines, notably the South-Western. Another construction followed, in which the seats were transverse, and which was divided into compartments, but open from end to end. Little glazed peep-holes were provided here and there, but the main openings for light and air were closed by wooden shutters simply. Miserable vehicles were these to travel in ; a moody darkness reigned within ; in summer choking dust, in winter chilling fog, were your constant companions *de voyage*. True bedbeds were they of rheum and influenza—*were*, may are ; for these constructions still survive, and are common on most of our lines.

Of late years really comfortable carriages have been provided by the great companies running northwards, by the North-Western, Midland, and Great Northern ; but on the lines running southwards, and on many of the local northern lines, the third-class accommodation is disgraceful exceedingly.

It is not very long since no lights were exhibited in third-class carriages, and there is still a good deal of room for improvement in that respect. In the early days of parliamentary trains the writer was travelling by one of these humble conveyances, when at a roadside station two ladies entered the carriage in a hesitating nervous manner, as if half afraid of the enterprise they had undertaken. The elder was a decidedly ancient virgin, with a face that retained some of its freshness, but that was covered over with a network of little wrinkles like the cracks in an old oil-painting. The younger was also *passée*, but had not yet abandoned all claims to youth, and was evidently petted and protected by her elder sister as if she were yet a little girl. They looked round timorously at the motley assemblage of labourers, farmers, publicans, tramps, and so on, but seated themselves resignedly at last, tucking up their dresses in all directions to avoid contaminations. Presently the train whisked into a tunnel. ‘O, this is dreadful, sister!’ whispered the younger, clutching the elder by the arm ; ‘in the dark with all these men!’ ‘My dear, I am prepared,’ said the other, with solemn triumph. And drew from her pocket a box of wax matches, one of which she lighted, and then devoted herself during the rest of her passage through the tunnel to the task of nourishing and preserving the vestal flame. The fair faded faces illumined by the feeble taper, the dark cavernous carriage with its half-defined occupants looking on with varied expressions of fun, sarcasm, or suppressed indignation, somehow remain fixed in one’s memory.

But as far as lights go, if there be a light at all, its brilliance is not a matter of great importance. When there is not sufficient daylight to read or watch the country through which you pass, it is

best to go to sleep, and not lay the seeds of future blindness by trying to read by lamplight. So we will not insist on any very brilliant illumination, but confine our demands on behalf of the third-class public to a good, popular, comfortable railway-carriage. Wooden seats and backs, if they are shaped with due reference to the anatomy of the human frame, are preferable to any other; certainly better, take them all the year round, than seats upholstered with sticky leather or musty cloth. If one is a sybarite or an invalid, one can carry one's own cushions. But perhaps for through traffic it would be desirable to have a little more luxury in the way of padded seats, and so on.

As time goes on, and the bulk of the population get into the habit of travelling in comfortable carriages at cheap fares, it is probable that the use of the first class will decline, and that the saving in 'haulage' and the simplifying of accounts involved in running only one class of carriages will bring about its ultimate abolition.

'What,' cries my Lord Fitzdoodle—'what, travel with my own servants!' Why, not necessarily; for your lordship could hire a special carriage for the conveyance of your whole establishment. And even if you did accompany your servants, it would be better for you than for me or the rest of the British public out of livery. You are accustomed to them. The smell of stale flour and pomatum that is nauseous to us must be grateful to your lordship's nose as so much incense to your self-importance. Their airs and graces would probably be checked by your presence; they would be less offensive to their fellow-passengers of every degree.

And, by the way, this flunkey question is the only point on which one will regret the abolition of second class. You could always avoid these gentry in the third class, and they are the only section of humanity that one need avoid. Soldiers, if not too much intoxicated, are rather pleasant companions. Policemen and prisoners one can frequently gain ideas from. Agricultural labourers often have a tranquillity and politeness about them that is refreshing to come in contact with. Artisans of all kinds are the most instructive fellow-voyagers one can have. Even your navvy or your collier a little tact and good temper will enable you to get on with. But to travel with a carriage-load of flunkies is one of the most humiliating of earthly trials. We would have a new law enacted and added compulsorily to the companies' bylaws: 'Flunkies, unless accompanied by their owners, will not be allowed to travel in the company's carriages.'

'But,' says Gogmagog, a friend from the City, anent the abolition of classes, 'these democratic notions are all very well, but they won't go down here. Do you think I would suffer my wife or my daughter to travel in a carriage where they might have to listen to

language, and be exposed to insult and annoyance?' Well, not by that other people's wives and daughters have perforce to put up with this, and that a preponderance of decent people in a carriage fully secures decent behaviour, it is quite evident that, in the present state of morals and manners of our loose floating population, and low, no woman at all travelling alone ought to be exposed to risk of insult unless she chooses to incur it. But the way to do this is to provide a compartment, as is done in French railways in all classes, for ladies alone. Such a provision is desirable though, and by lessening the number of classes you facilitate its adoption.

Class prejudices and prepossessions must eventually give way to the plain logic of facts and the irresistible arguments of profit and loss. Railway companies, like everybody else, must march with the times, and the public will indeed be ungrateful if it fails to support those who have initiated this movement, which in its result will bring within the reach of every one the maximum of accommodation at the minimum of cost.

FREDERICK TALBOT.

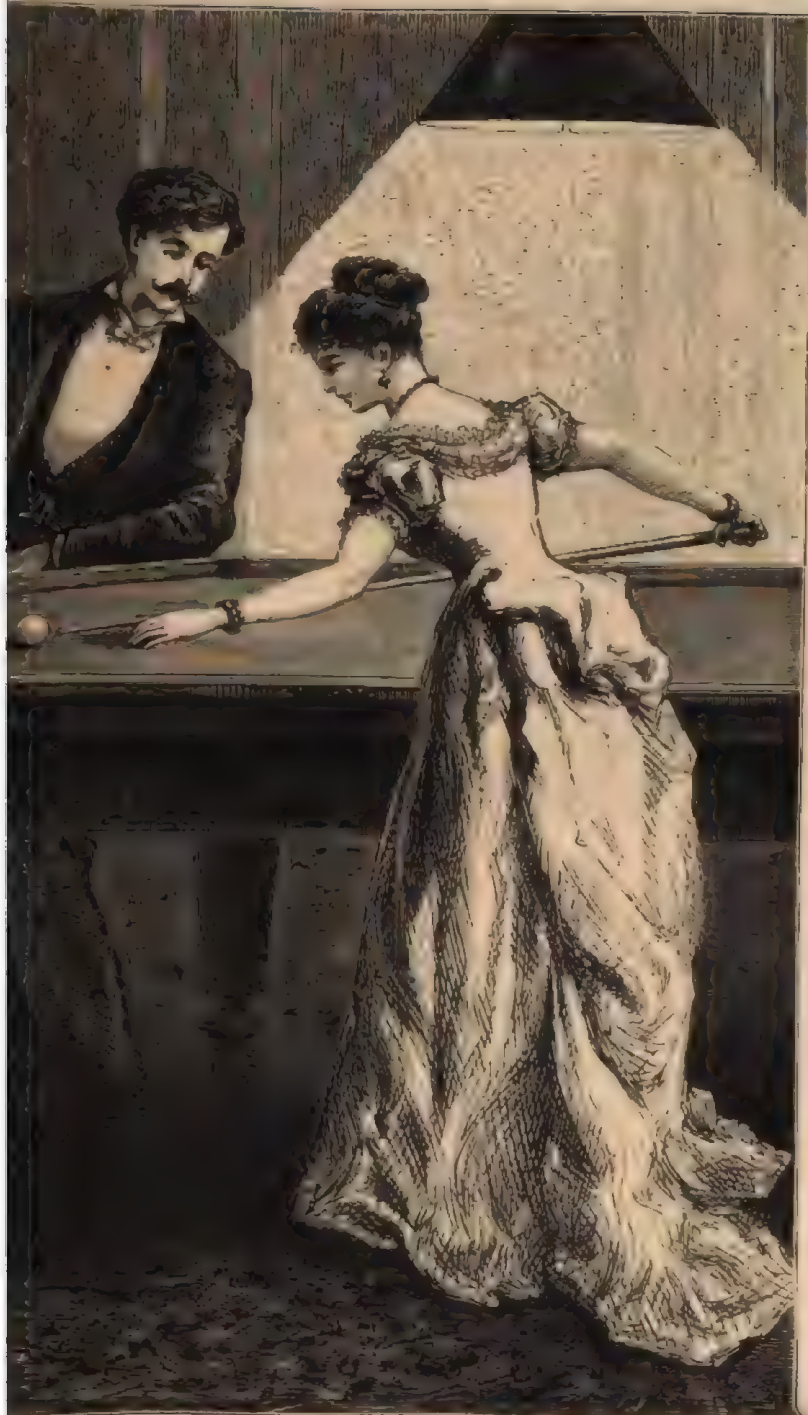
AT BILLIARDS

THE hand that she plays with is whiter
Than ivory sprinkled with snow ;
And I'm but a saint-hearted fighter
With such a redoubtable foe.
The balls that for me are unruly
Roll in as if sped by a charm,
Præneste's divinity duly
Has aided that exquisite arm !

With cool disregard of the angles,
She plays for impossible 'breaks ;'
My heart more completely entangles
By making seductive mistakes.
The balls fly in every direction,
My mind mathematical mourns,
The angle that's call'd 'of reflection'
The 'angle of incidence' scorns !

I smile on their motions erratic,
I'm bland about 'fluking' to-night,
I call up a look quite ecstatic
When calmly she pockets the white.
I win when a loser ! Ah, sweetest,
You play with the daintiest art ;
That's game ! My defeat's the completest,
And here is the stake, dear,—my heart !

H. SAVILE CLARKE.



F. del.

C. M. Jenkin, sc

AT BILLIARDS.



THESPIS AND THEMIS

One of the most amusing of the many amusing passages in *Lothair* Mr. Disraeli has drawn attention to the conspicuous place occupied by the drama in the thoughts and affections of the well-to-do and opulent idlers of London. To keep or subsidise a theatre as fashionable and expensive a pastime as to have a training-stable at Newmarket, a yacht at Cowes, a pack of harriers in Bedfordshire, a moor in Sutherlandshire, on which every grouse shot represents a sum of not less than one pound ten. A certain novel written by an authoress—whose works and whose identity will be sufficiently indicated when it is said that her heroes are hybrid compositions of the Homeric warrior and the modern prize-fighter, and that her heroines suggest the image of the classic Messalina daubed with the pigments and inspired with the venal appetites of the nineteenth-century Phryne—has given us in the most extravagant yet the most sober of her fictions a very magnificent description indeed of the interior of one of these Thespian temples, resting upon a basis of amateur enterprise, and a highly-glorified and edifying exposition of the principles on which it was conducted. Eventually, if I remember correctly, the gorgeous edifice, with all its decorations, as splendid and as costly even as the dressing-gowns of Guy-Livingstonian hardsmen, is stripped from floor to ceiling by an infuriated mob, and the sculpture and carving which adorn balconies and boxes is pulled down, till, like the baseless fabric of a vision, there is left not a rack behind. 'I wonder,' remarks Hugo Bohun in the romance of the Premier whose title is mentioned above, 'when he marries, whether Brecon will keep on his theatre.' 'His theatre!' exclaims Lothair, who during the period of his Italian escapade has ceased to be an *courant* with the doings of the great world. 'Yes,' responds his friend; 'the high mode now for a real swell is to have a theatre. Brecon has the Frolic; Kate Simmons is his manager, and calls herself Athalie de Montfort. You ought to have a theatre, Lothair; and if there is not one to have, you should build one; it would show that you were alive again, and had the spirit of an English noble, and atone for some of your eccentricities.' When the youthful patrician, thus addressed, intimates that he may succeed his father the Duke of Brecon in his proprietorship of the Frolic, as he, Lothair, in his innocence, hardly supposes he will maintain such an establishment when he is married, he is informed by his Mentor that it is the thing. Several of our greatest swells have theatres and

are married. In fact, a first-rate man should have everything, and therefore he ought to have both a theatre and a wife.'

This phenomenon, then new to him in English society, sends Lothair off into one of his customary brown studies; but our brilliant author does not hint at the solution of the problem. There is no doubt about the fact that we are becoming every day more and more of a playgoing people. That is the inevitable recoil from the incessantly increasing demands made by the conditions of modern life upon our industry and our energies. We have more work, and we demand more amusement. There are many hundreds of well-dressed young gentlemen in London, and, for the matter of that, of gentlemen not very young, whose only form of recreation is the drama. The club, as an institution, has conspired to help the theatre as an institution. That company of four, every member of whom now, as always at this hour—6.30 P.M.—is in full evening dress, dining at yonder table in the coffee-room of the Mushroom Club, is exclusively composed of *habitués* of the dramatic shrines of the metropolis. You might hunt the drawing-rooms of town from Tyburnia to Pimlico, from Bloomsbury to Brompton, without seeing either this particular Brown, Jones, Robinson, or Smith mixing in the throng. They are bachelors, and to frequent the playhouse is their way of seeing society. It is true that sometimes even these stanch patrons of the stage are half-ashamed of the frequency of their attendances, and at such moments of compunction, if you are impertinent enough to question them as to their evening destination, you will probably be met with an evasive answer, or else a fabricated statement, which is, under the circumstances, I think, permissible. For instance, when, one evening in the height of last season, Robinson was issuing from the portal of his club about eight P.M., he replied to some inquisitive friend who assumed that he was 'going to the play,' 'No; an engagement for dinner. Belgrave-square, cabman!' he shouted in audible tones. Now either Robinson, when he arrived at the mansion to which he directed his charioteer to drive, must have found that he had mistaken the day for which he was bidden, or that a sudden calamity had fallen upon the household, or the banquet must have been conducted upon Barmecidal principles, and concluded in an incredibly quick time; or, as a fourth alternative, directly Robinson's cab disappeared from his friend's sight he must have countermanded his instructions, and have gone off at a tangent to the Gaiety Theatre. Certain it is that at a quarter to nine the friend above alluded to saw Robinson seated in a stall in Mr. Hollingshead's excellently-conducted playhouse, intently gazing on the scenic spectacle.

It would probably be found that gentlemen of the class to whom yonder diners belong materially contribute to the prosperity of more than one London playhouse—gentlemen who, while having neither

lands, nor houses, nor wives, have their share of this world's treasure, whose social position is not exactly as well defined as it might be, and who, adhering with tolerable application to their commercial or official duties by day, seek their pastime when the gas-lamps are lit, and find it too.

There are other specific reasons which might be assigned for the existence of a state of things which came home to Lothair with so strong a sense of surprise on his return from his Mediterranean escapade. What Greece was to old Rome, Paris is to new London. The French capital is the cynosure of the present and the rising generation. When little Jack Brandling comes back to the metropolitan 'mill' after his Long-Vacation continental trip—very likely the first one he has ever made—he is irrepressibly full of admiring appreciation of all that he has seen, done, and heard on the other side of the Channel. He talks about the delicious vintage of Bordeaux, and he drinks a vile compound of sloe-berries and lemon-juice at eighteenpence a bottle for breakfast, instead of tea. In the *Parisians*, Bulwer has given us a capital sketch of a French nobleman who eats and dresses and lives generally after what he conceives to be the true British model. Well, the compliment is abundantly and with interest returned by Brandling the small. He extols the Parisian régime generally, and naturally he is enamoured of the Parisian stage. The French are a playgoing people, and Peroy is determined to be a playgoing individual. We English conquered at Waterloo; but it is the old story of *Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit*, &c.; and what is the case with Flitter is the case with a large proportion of his compatriots. They have borrowed their theatrical passion from the French, just as the Romans did from the Athenians, and just as our modern playwrights do their dramatic plots from a Sardou, a Dumas, or a nameless host of minor writers. The dramatic *furor* is contagious. It is quite certain that, unless, as a result of our increased association, thanks to tidal trains and decreased fares, with our lively neighbour the Gaul, we had become animated with a wish to assimilate in some respects the social life of London to that of Paris, the theatre would never have achieved the popularity, the prestige which, bad plays, bad acting, and dull vulgarity notwithstanding, unquestionably belong to it. Just as we reproduce French fashions and ape French cooking, so our *jeunesse dorée* mimics the dramatic enthusiasm of the *rentier* under the Second Empire. But the matter is one in which there is a good deal to be said as to the influence of an august individual initiative. What, I should like to know, would be the result if the statement were to cease to appear in the papers, that last night his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, attended by Lord This and Captain the Honourable That, had visited the Theseum Theatre, and had condescended to express ap-

proval of the performance? We may have no Court in these days, but the Heir Apparent has a following, and sets the fashion to the young men of the period, and, indeed, to the polite world at large. Theatrical managers are under a debt of unspeakable gratitude to the dramatic proclivities of the eldest son of the Queen, and of the members—her gracious Majesty always excepted—of the Royal Family generally. I have no wish to swell the cuckoo-cry chorus of the drama's decline; but I may venture, I think, to suggest that were it not for our close acquaintance with the social usages of that Lutetia of the ancients, which has become, as Mr. Sutherland Edwards once neatly observed, the Lætitia of the moderns, and the personal interest which we all feel in the doings of the illustrious gentleman who, we hope, will one day—*absit omen*—be King of England, we should scarcely be the theatre-going people we are. In France the drama rests upon its own merits; in England it does not. In France the State subsidises the stage, because it is a great means of æsthetic, if not always ethical, education; in England the stage is subsidised by that species of private patronage and munificence which astonished Lothair, because it has at last become 'the high mode,' as, in phraseology somewhat antiquated, Mr. Disraeli chooses to put it.

If there is a single grade in our professional hierarchy which has established a more intimate alliance with the dramatic interest than another, it is the legal. Themis and Thespis have met together and have kissed each other. There is not a *soi-disant* literary club in London in which the majority of applicants for admission are not barristers or solicitors. Your aspiring advocate, or solicitor of 'artistic sympathies,' is everywhere. Hortensius is reputed to have been a great patron of the stage, and there is no reason, perhaps, why we should deny to the rising ornaments of the forum the consolatory inference that to be a patron of the stage is to have taken the first step towards rivalling the reputation of that great Roman pleader. A distinguished luminary of the Common-Law bar remarked not long ago at a public dinner—a dramatic banquet of course—'that he supposed the close connection which existed between lawyers and actors was to be attributed to the circumstance that the latter were proverbially litigious.' It is true that few weeks in the year pass without a theatrical legal case of some kind or another being announced or being actually tried; and not improbably the delicate and very easily over-strained relations which exist amongst members of the theatrical profession do conduce to a nearer cultivation of the acquaintance of counsel and attorney than would otherwise be the case. But the modern Roscius and the modern Hortensius are attracted to each other by reasons quite independent of this. It is possible to be a great actor, and to know nothing of any conceivable subject except the stage and dramatic

terature and effects generally. There are exceptions to the rule, but the popular *histrion* almost invariably finds the interest of the circumscribed world in which he lives sufficient for his wants. To him literature is a blank, and politics a chaos. He knows absolutely nothing more of the one or the other than he accidentally encounters in the *Times*, which he commits to heart and delivers with gesture. The talk of a dramatic drawing-room is an echo of the theatrical greenroom. It is the essence and amalgam, the epitome and concentration of shop. Now this sort of thing is entertaining enough to those whom it actually concerns, but it is not calculated to edify or amuse the casual listener—so at least it would not be unfair to presume. Fortunately the idiosyncrasies of the modern representatives of ordinary Themis—or say at once Common Law—are exactly calculated to make them an audience fit though few. The cleverness, the readiness, the industry, the energy, and the courage of these gentlemen are beyond all praise. But their range of interest is limited, and their horizon narrow. They have been at a public school and at a university, and have, very likely, distinguished themselves at each. It makes no difference. The bar is like Aaron's rod, and it swallows up all the rest. A few are interested in politics, but a very few only. For the enormous majority the only things which have the slightest fascination in a general way are the procedure of the courts and the scandals of the profession. Now, if some species of social or conversational relief was not from time to time forthcoming these gentlemen could not exist. What is called general society is too vague: it must be something more definite. The counter attraction to the gossip of legal circles must be something very positive, very strongly pronounced, very special. These are conditions which the stage and which intercourse with those who strut their brief hour on that stage exactly supply. Theatrical entertainments are an intellectual relief; theatrical society exercises a genuine charm, because, while it breaks the wearying monotony of professional life, it does not painfully remind Hortensius in his shirtsleeves of the inferiority of his own attainments, or the contracted scope of his interests.

In the old days when Evans's Supper-rooms were what the imagination still likes to picture them as being, before the old paintings had been taken down, the old wainscoting superseded by plate looking-glasses, before the floor was covered with carpets from the looms of Brussels and Amsterdam, while Paddy Green and his snuff-box still flourished, and *atra mors* had only just beckoned Herr von Joel and his stick over to 'the majority,' there assembled within the precincts of that well-known hall a group which was a perpetual and nightly-recurring symbol of the intimacy of the alliance between Themis and Thespis. You might have sat for hours with those *convives* without hearing a single word uttered that had not refer-

ence directly to the bar or the stage. When the cleverest cross-examiner in England had finished laying down his doctrines on matters dramatic, on actors and plays, on theatres and many other kindred themes; when the conversation flagged, and the interlocutors were awaiting the advent of some new member of the clique fresh from the play,—then, by way of variety, a professionally legal turn would be given to the talk. And so it went on for hour after hour, till the last glass was finished and the last cigar smoked, and the great lawyer suddenly remembered that he had a case at the Criminal Court early that same morning. Upon these two topics the changes were indefatigably and enthusiastically rung. It has been said that ‘patronage is with the lawyer a kind of second instinct.’ On these occasions Hortensius may have liked Roscius to be with him none the less because he was conscious of being surrounded by an array of convivial clients. And what Hortensius must do, those who have not as yet reached that same level of professional reputation feel it incumbent on them to do. If the great man entertains every seventh day a number of the lights, male and female, of the British stage, those to whom the great man is the most admirable of all exemplars feel it incumbent upon them to exercise a hospitality similar in spirit and purpose, though on a smaller scale, themselves. Hortensius himself may only preside at dramatic banquets of the first order; but those who study to be like Hortensius conceive that they do well to take the chair on much less imposing occasions.

The alliance is one which may have its advantages and pleasures, but it is certainly one which is fraught to the full with its anxieties and drawbacks. There may be a reciprocity of sympathy, and the confederacy may be based upon principles of mutual assistance—at least an intelligible bond of union. Law confers upon its professors some sort of titular dignity. If it is not an occupation, it is a calling. Briefless or not briefless, the barrister has a social status of his own, from the simple fact that he is a barrister. And he sheds his reflected prestige, or call it, if you will, respectability, upon those who sit at his table under the shadow of his wing. No doubt this is a further explanation of that irresistible law by which in the modern régime Thespis is attracted to Themis. You might search that most convenient compendium of universal information, *Whitaker's Almanac*, from the first page to the last, without encountering any attempt to fix the position or to describe the style of Roscius. So far as the technology of Debrett is concerned, he is an outcast and a vagabond. His place is vague, fluctuating, indefinite. Old philosophers have told us that nature is penetrated by an aspiration after regularity, and even in the most Bohemian of bosoms something like the instinct—witness the present case—is to be found. When Tom Stylus in *Society* denounces the conventionalities of life,

he knows very well—and so does his audience—that if he were to receive an invitation to dine with a nobleman, he would be delighted ; and that he is almost as glad of an opportunity to put on a dress-coat as those gentlemen who appear in gorgeous evening costumes, with diamond studs sparkling down a well-developed shirt-front, on the occasion of *table-d'hôte* dinner at grand hotels, vastly pleased with the idea that they are seeing the *beau monde*. It is exactly because his calling is anomalous that Roscius is drawn so closely and so invariably to the representatives of a guild, whose existence is so completely acknowledged, the limits and nature of whose calling are so lucidly defined. And Hortensius is gratified, because all contrasts are gratifying.

But the penalty has to be paid, nevertheless. The union is often happy enough, but now and again it claims a victim, and makes an illustration of him after a very exemplary fashion. When Hortensius aspirant, or he who ought to be an aspirant Hortensius, is fairly stage-struck, we witness a very melancholy spectacle. Everything is made to give way ; and to what ? In the large majority of cases to utter heartrending failure. Mr. George Juniper is not a member of the Temple, or of any Inn of Court ; but he had once upon a time a flourishing little attorney practice of his own somewhere in the City. As ill-luck would have it, he fell into that he was pleased to call 'a literary and dramatic lot.' Before a year was over his professional ruin was complete. He got a play accepted ; it was acted, it was successful. On the strength of that initial and solitary triumph he shut up his office and sold his practice. His first achievement in the theatrical line of business was his only one. The drama, if we like to impersonate it in a male shape in the figure of its father, Thespis, may wed Themis, and unspeakable felicity may often result. But a good deal more frequently it would be a juster and more appropriate metaphor to regard them as rival mistresses, each determined on striving to obtain exclusive possession of her lover. Law is proverbially jealous of literature ; but the stage is an infinitely more seductive snare to the statistics of law than literature. Young men of twenty-five have generally acquired enough experience of the conditions of nineteenth-century life to know that it is the part of a lunatic, merely in reference to the promptings of a feeble ambition, and the dim consciousness of some facility of language, and some fluency of what may pass as ideas, to abandon wilfully the chance of earning an honest livelihood in some recognised department of professional industry, and to rush incontinently into journalism or fiction. But the possibilities of success in a theatrical career are so infinite and so dizzy. The world behind the footlights may be an Eldorado, and so Hortensius, who is getting heartily sick of spending his days waiting for solicitors' clerks who call not, laden with the oblong docu-

ments on whose backs are inscribed the magic words, 'With Mr. Briefless, fifty guineas,' and who has no other enjoyment in life save his evenings at the play, determines to cultivate dramatic authorship, and is rewarded accordingly. I wonder how many plays, tragic, comic, melodramatic, farcical and otherwise, there are extant in London—the work of heads and hands that ought to have been occupied in drawing up opinions. The human race stands aghast at the mere suggestion of their arithmetical pretensions and physical bulk.

Hortensius gets the better of this sort of thing in time, perhaps. Now and then he succeeds and retires; occasionally he retires and succeeds; more frequently he retires without success. He may come into a snug fortune, marry a rich and blooming girl, keep a house in Mayfair, and have a place in the country. But if he has once fairly been attacked by the dramatic fever, the mania will recur at intervals. It is essentially a periodically intermittent disease. When the fit is on, *chartum calamumque et scrinia plena* and after a few weeks of grievous intellectual labour, he deludes himself of a tragedy which is an abortion, or a comedy which, like its predecessors, is stillborn. The London managers know him well. They do not throw cold water on his efforts, for they are aware that he is one of their steadiest patrons. The professors know him well, too; they foster his delusion, for he is a kind fellow and a not inconvenient companion. Nevertheless, I cannot look at him without being led into a train of melancholy speculation as to how much paper he has filled, and to how little purpose.

T. H. S. ESCOT

A ROSE AT THE WINDOW

BY UNCLE TOBY

'HER 'prentices han' she tried on man,
And then she made the lasses O.'

As I repeat the dear old quotation, Philosopha looks at me austerely over the top of her spectacles, wrinkling her Roman nose. She is tall and angular, is Philosopha, dingy as to clothing (it would never occur to you to speak of her 'dress'), with a large frontal development, and no back hair to speak of. Her severe gaze makes me feel as though I had been guilty of an immoral remark; I blush, but I persist. Hebrew, Greek, and Sanscrit are as milk-and-water to her; Euclid is her pastime, Latin her lightest literature.

'Immoral vulgarity,' she replies.

'Vulgarity? Well, yes; I accept your criticism; it is all I desire to prove. I triumph in holding the common opinion. I adore the sex, madam, but I hate a she-male.'

At the words 'I adore the sex,' Frivolita, a bewitching little blonde, looks up from the cushions wherein she has ensconced herself with the last exotic from Mudie's hothouse. She is plump and rosy, is Frivolita, and might be altogether charming; she has no frontal development to speak of, but makes up for it by extensive auricomous arrangements. She looks at me for a moment with a mixture of amusement and pity; it is a monstrous presumption on my part to 'adore the sex,' the 'desire of the moth for the star,' futile, but not unflattering (as far as it goes); and with a smile she subsides softly again into the mysteries of unlimited 'sensation.'

The cold sneer has become fixed on Philosopha's face, but she remains silent, as who should say, 'Let him rave;' but little I'll reck if she let me rail on, for the truth is I'm not inclined to mince matters with her. She has already given me to understand that I belong to past ages; that I am a debased specimen; that every dog has his day, and that mine is gone by. What the gorilla is to Dr. Darwin, such am I (in her opinion) to Philosopha. I am obsolete; I am the inferior male animal, whilst she is the development of species, the coming creature, the perfected she-male.

Let it not be thought that I am some sour old cynic whose bachelor tub is too tight for him; neither let it be supposed that I am a gallant gay Lothario, a ci-devant Don Juan, one of those elderly juveniles who never seem to know what o'clock it is; still less am I one of your 'four-bottle men,' in whose young days beauties were loudly toasted, whilst men talked freely of their charms, and were

found next morning 'down among the dead men.' No, I am a family man, the father of half a dozen daughters, and I am glad to say they are all *women*, dear, sweet, charming women; not a she-male amongst them. Thus, when I said I 'adored the sex,' I said it in all honour and sobriety. I worship woman; and, whether as maid, matron, or mother, I give her her pedestal. I agree with Milton that she is 'Heaven's last best gift,' and every man worthy the name agrees with me. Thus I glory in the 'vulgar' majority in which I find myself, and proceed to say my say.

We have lately heard a great deal of women's rights, and a little—comparatively a very little—of women's wrongs. With the question, popularly so-called, of women's rights, I may say at once that I have not the very smallest sympathy; with the less popular one of women's wrongs, the very greatest.

First, as to women's rights.

Are they *women's* rights about which the clamour is being made? Are they not rather men's rights, which certain strong women of the bolder sort are bent on arrogating to themselves, without for a moment considering the logical consequences of such arrogance? *Place aux dames!* has been the cry of chivalry in all ages, but *elles ont changé tout cela*. A fair field and no favour, they say, is all that they desire; they will go in with the ruck; they will clamour and fight, and shove and jostle their way to the front; they will harangue you on platforms; they will bear with a philosophy superior to your own the rotten eggs and cabbage-stalks, the potato-peelings and the jeers; they will not even shrink from coarse abuse. They have a great mission to fulfil; they have to assert and maintain the rights of women; let the inferior sex swear never so loudly, they will be true to their colours. There must be martyrs in every cause, especially in every infant cause; they are ready to die the death. If they assert their right, they must be ready to maintain their might; they must measure themselves with men, and not be found wanting. Let the weaker sisterhood tamely submit to have the crumbs of redress flung tardily at them from the masculine table—such passivity is not for them; they will out into the battle of life; in the strife of tongues a treble is always the shrillest; in the clamour of argument it is one of the few traditions of their sex which they have not discarded to have the last word; their staying power is incredible, they will weary out any number of their male adversaries. Solomon knew what he was talking about when he said that the continual dropping of a very rainy day and a contentious woman have a painfully depressing likeness to each other.

It is difficult to speak of the emancipated she-male without a tone of caricature. She is a caricature; a manly woman is an anomaly, 'at best a contradiction still;' she may draw on the *nether* garments, and assume the occupations and habiliments of

the other sex, but she cannot put on manhood with the pantaloons. There are other matters which cannot be adopted or discarded at will; she may unsex herself, but she is an unsexed woman still. It is in vain that you tell her God created man and woman, and 'He never made his work for man to mend.' Nature has clearly defined their relative functions; their vocations are distinct; and the attempt of women to arrogate to themselves men's work is as irrational as it would be to impose women's work on men. Your random strain offends her finer sense, and 'convinced against her will, she's of the same opinion still.' Old Jeremy Bentham laid it down as an axiom that the greatest happiness of the greatest number was the proper study of the competent legislator. Is the greatest happiness of the greatest number likely to be promoted by the development of the she-male sex? Men will answer 'No.' What man ever regretted not having had a she-male mother, or desired a she-male wife? Women will answer 'No.' They like the real article. A manly woman is a double cheat. The she-male voice remains to be heard; it is in an infinitesimal minority; but it makes up in persistency for what it wants in volume. Let us take an example. Can those historical ladies who stuck to the benches of the Edinburgh lecture-room with a barnacle-like tenacity really believe that their fifteen or twenty personalities (I am not great at figures, so don't let one of them be down upon me to prove there were sixteen or twenty-one) were likely to produce more valuable results, to benefit the human race more widely, to set a surer mark upon the age, than the whole sum-total of medical students, who in their manly modesty elected Joseph-like to flee rather than endure she-male Kameradschaft in the clinical lecture-room?*

The strong-minded women who lead the van of this movement tell us that Zurich and Harvard send out their women-doctors, and

* 'The Second Division of the Scotch Court of Session is at present bearing arguments of counsel in the case of medical female students, brought before it on appeal from the decision of the First Division. It is impossible not to be struck by the nature of the claim urged, and the probable effects if it were to be granted. Not only is the Court asked to affirm the right of the ladies to graduation on passing the ordinary examinations, but it is sought to compel the medical professors who object to lecture to lady students to teach them in all respects the same as the male students, under penalty of dismissal from the office if they refuse. The counsel for the ladies said two courses were open to the professors: they might teach the women along with the male students, or they might teach them separately; "but teach them they must, or resign their chairs." The Senatus had the power to regulate the teaching and discipline of the University, and upon the refusal on the part of a professor, the Senatus might bring the matter before the University Court, which could then dismiss him. It is a bad prospect therefore for the Medical School of Edinburgh if the ladies succeed. Nearly all the professors have declined to teach women, and there is thus a possibility of Edinburgh University being left without medical professors,' *Pall Mall Budget*, Nov. 2, 1872.

why not we? Perhaps Zurich and Harvard have found that the demand produces the supply; perhaps the ladies have it all their own way at those universities;* but here in Great Britain we don't see it; and when the Scotch students fled howling, every Briton fled in spirit with them. 'We have as much right to be here as you,' cried the ladies; 'yours is the abuse of man's might, ours is moral force and intellectual right.' 'Ha, ha! selection of species, development of the she-male sex,' retorted the rude young men; and the spinsters (of course they were spinsters), we may be sure, did not remain their debtors. 'At least, they might have remembered,' said a good-natured partisan of the female fanatics *per la medicina*, 'that their opponents were women, and not have hooted them.' 'But if they forgot it themselves?' suggests a wag of the good old Conservative type, like myself.

If women will have this sort of thing, let them found a chair for their own especial benefit, and—if the courageous being is extant who will face them unsupported by his fellows—elect a professor, who shall lecture to them on the diseases of women and children; let them—if mothers confiding enough can be found to make the career a profitable one—go forth and cure those of their own sex and the tender in age; but let them, as they value that modesty which is above rubies, avoid sitting amongst medical students in the common lecture-hall, and discussing delicate details with doctors in dissecting-rooms. It is said that at St. Petersburg such a chair has been founded, and that female students are flocking to the feet of the medical Gamaliel. It is hard to imagine how things can have come to such a pass in Russia, the country of typical Conservatism, as to make a female medical school a government necessity; nor can any one who is acquainted with Russian social life understand from what ranks these lady students are recruited. There is this to be said—the news comes from afar, and may be taken with a good many grains of salt.†

There is field enough, God wot, for women's energies rightly directed without their overstepping the bounds which dignity, modesty, and custom have drawn about their sex, and made it sacred. If they have no home duties or ties (and of how few can this be strictly said!),

* Since the above was written, the *Pall Mall Gazette* of 9th June 1873 quotes a remarkable Russian official organ relative to the Russian women students in the University of Zurich. 'Very unfavourable reports,' it adds, 'have reached the Government relative to the conduct of those young women. The misconduct of these Russian women has so provoked the local population, that even the lodging-house-keepers hesitate to take them into their houses.'

† Since writing the above, the following extract from the *Medical Journal* has appeared in the daily papers: 'Three hundred young women have applied to be admitted to medical lectures at St. Petersburg, but only fifty could be admitted, that number being the limit appointed by Government.'

'Are there no beggars at their gates,
Nor any poor about their lands?'

Are there not the grand problem of education to be solved? Can we not teach the orphan boy to read, the orphan girl to sew? Are there not hospitals, where tenderness and patience and love (the divinest attributes of women) are most fitly at home? Are there not the aged, the very young, the maimed, the halt, and the lame to be cheered along life's thorny way? Are there not those who are unfortunate still, with misery behind and despair before them, who are tenderly dealt with and rescued? Only let us have no false sentiment, no platform declamation, no tampering with questions which it can form no part of women's rights to discuss in public places. Let love, and Christian charity, and womanly gentleness justify the work: 'Neither do I condemn thee' is enough here.

And if physic have its votaries, why not law and divinity? What is to prevent some female apostle arising and assuming the sacerdotal robes, and, like the heroine of a modern novel, leading five silly women's hearts in the garb of a fascinating young girl? Why should not the Tichborne of the future retain she as a counsellor? Women love dogma and drenching, even in their prime state, and Justice is represented after their likeness—though this would be no recommendation in the eyes of the female tyrants to fame who have renounced petticoats for pantalettes.

It has been said that the few must be sacrificed to the many; hitherto where women were concerned the reverse has obtained. 'The women and children first!' is the captain's cry as the boats are lowered. It is needless; it is a matter of course. Not the bravest fellow there but recognises the claim upon his generosity; it is less a virtue than an instinct; not a thing to reason about, but a thing to be blindly obeyed.

'Any gentleman get outside to oblige a lady?' asks John the genial conductor. It is a pouring wet day; slippery pavements, blurred gas-lamps, coachmen in waterproofs, dripping umbrellas. The very prose of existence touched by his subtle pencil is a latent poetry.

The spirit of chivalry is there inside the 'bus.' A moment's pause ensues, an inward grumble perhaps (man is but mortal), then some one responds to the call. The conductor knows he is; beneath those many waistcoats surely one chivalrous heart will be found to beat; and the mute inglorious martyr comes forth and ascends to the knifeboard without so much as a smile or a word of thanks from the 'lady' he has 'obliged;' for the time and the place are not propitious to sentiment, and the conductor slams the door with all the energy of a practical man. Again, at railway stations, on steamboats, in theatres, there are women's privileges; every man is every woman's champion. But the Betsy Bloomers and

the Mary Walkers of the world must fight their own battles; they must remain on the sinking ship, sit upon the knifeboard, be jostled and shoved and kneaded in the crowd. They can expect no such delicate devotion; the graceful bloom of modesty has been lost to them in the mob they love to frequent; it is a part of their doctrine that a woman should stand up for herself, and hit out straight. A woman who takes to walking the hospital, to frequenting dissecting-rooms, and lowering herself generally to man's level, though she may have obtained what she calls woman's rights, has for ever lost woman's privileges. She can come to us reeking from the anatomical theatre; she can elbow medical students in her desire to witness all the thrilling details of a 'sensational' operation; she may have a nodding acquaintance with all the Bob Sawyers of her year; but her glory is for ever gone: she has voluntarily laid down the crown of womanhood and abdicated her throne. Men no longer bow the knee before her; she has lost the substance for the shadow, and has ceased to be a woman without having become a man.

But I should be doing woman a grievous injury if I let it appear that I thought her a mere drawing-room toy, or that I despised her intelligence or disallowed her claims. 'There is nothing,' says Lord Burleigh, 'so fulsome as a shee-foole.'

'Woman,' as Shakespeare has it, 'is not bred so dull but she can learn;' and we have only to look at his heroines to see how he honoured the sex. Even Milton, whose matrimonial experiences were none of the happiest, confesses that 'greatness of mind and nobleness create an awe about her, as a guard angelic placed.' Are those ladies who clamour on platforms and preach a propaganda that would have terrified former generations to be held up as an improvement on the soft, gentle, refined woman to whom we owe

'those graceful arts,
Those thousand decencies that daily flow
From all her words and actions,'

tempering our rude force by her gentle power? The old poets did woman justice. She is man's companion, friend, helpmeet, now his rival or his contemptuous opponent; she is the lodestar of his existence, the goddess of his dreams, the glory of his home, the guardian angel of his hearth. He does not ask for a slave to do his will, or for a mere mindless beauty to beguile his senses; in the words of a noble old song, the name of whose author I do not know, he

'Looks for spirit in her eyes
And meaning in her air.'

Mere physical beauty, though it may charm, can never content him; like the true poet his longings are infinite, and he asks not only for the damask cheek and ivory arm, but also for

'the animated form
That speaks a mind within.
A face where awful honour shines,
Where sense and sweetness move,
And angel innocence refines
The tenderness of love.
These are the soul of beauty's frame,
Without whose vital aid
Unfinish'd all her features seem,
And all her roses dead.'

Can one wish for anything warmer, tenderer, or truer than this song? Lives there a man with soul so dead to the delights that woman's dress can afford, as to declare he prefers the inaccessible and chimneypot of Dr. Mary Walker to the 'robably flowing, hair as free,' the 'careless shoestring in whose tie see a sweet civility,' or the 'winning wave deserving note of a estuous petticoat' of the quaint old poet's dainty darlings? are bewitching creations—women all over; charming, witty, a little wild it may be, as the birds are wild; frolicsome as young are in spring meadows; sweet, fresh, and fragrant, all roses lilies and daffydowndillies; creatures whose very playfulness must respect; delicate refined beings; no 'shee-fooles,' but able to their own; gay with the wholesome gaiety of youth, health, beauty; in whom the fearless freedom of the child and the joy of opening womanhood are combined; who, as Sir W. has nobly said, may be

'Uncertain, coy, and hard to please'

unshiny hours, but who, when 'pain and anguish wring the r,' are indeed ministering angels.

And it is to creatures like this that we are to prefer the grim empty she-male, angular in form, paradoxical in costume—brain-woman instead of the heart-woman! Forbid it, gods and ! We do not grudge them the best of everything; we only re that they should wield the sceptre of womanhood, and let selves be worshipped; for

'Where'er there's the smile of a woman,
As bright as a beam from above,
'Tis the rose looking in at the window,
And filling the dwelling with love.'

and women are the Platonic hemispheres wandering in space; finds in the other his and her completion, and their union forms perfect whole. Let women drop the antagonistic attitude. man's cause,' as Mr. Tennyson says, 'is man's.' Let her be

'All that not harms distinctive womanhood,
For woman is not undeveloped man, but diverse.'

then he goes on to say they should not be 'like to like, but like

in difference ;' that the man ' must not lose the wrestling thews that throw the world,' whilst the woman must gain in mental breadth,

'Till at the last she set herself to man
Like perfect music unto noble words.'

Mrs. Browning and George Eliot are specimens of what women can attain to without losing the attributes of their sex. Married poets and married authors, it may be truly said of these ladies that they have set themselves to man like perfect music unto noble words. There is not a man who can read the English language but would be proud to own their noble works, and yet the world has never heard that they were masculine ; on the contrary, of Mrs. Browning we know that there was a fragility and dependence about her which moved every one to tenderness who looked into her lustrous face. Yet who shall say that her genius bears the impress of the weakness of her sex ? George Eliot's virile pen takes us back a few centuries ; in her words there is 'an athletic sinew' and an Attic salt the savour of which we miss in many of our most graceful modern authors ; she, more than any other living writer, has the long pull and the strong pull ; she knows how to call a spade a spade in such a fashion as not to evoke hysterical contortions in her readers, and yet she is, in all her sublime tenderness and delicacy, essentially the woman.

'I don't like Mrs. Hannah' (More), says Miss Mitford in one of her outspoken criticisms ; 'can't abide her ; think her writings masculine—not in a good sense, but a bad one. She writes like a man in petticoats or a woman in breeches. All her books have a loud voice, a stern frown, and a long stride in them.' Can anything be more graphic ? The coming she-male is foreshadowed here, though the proper Mrs. Hannah, who was a prude and a philistine of the first order, would faint away in genteel horror at what the 'loud voices, stern frowns, and long strides' are capable of nowadays. But I have growled my growl. We know the kind of woman we don't want—it is the she-male ; we know the kind of woman we do—but she is rare. Not a professor in petticoats (Philosophy sublimely ignores my personalities), nor a doll all dimples and millinery (Frivolita makes a charming little *moue* as I say this) ; but

'A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller betwixt life and death ;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill ;
A perfect woman nobly plann'd,
To warn, to comfort, and command ;
And yet a spirit still and bright,
With something of an angel light.'

'This,' as Carlyle says, 'is Belief, all else Opinion, for which let whoso will worry—and be worried !'

ANCIENT MONUMENTS

MORBID craving after change seems to be the particular form of disease most prejudicial to a country like our own, whose government is based on popular caprice. No sane being, we affirm, could desire to exchange the freedom which is our national and imperial asset for Cæsarism, oligarchy, or pure democracy. Yet, just as many higher intellect, contrasting bitterly the homage rendered to rank-stability by society proper, to bank-notability by the vulgar, sighs for an ideal republic where genius should alone carry with it the content of a life-peerage, so also there attaches to fixity a certain acination, which is not to be found in a constitution whose essential elements may be bouleversed by the *coup d'état* of a general election. It is unpleasant to reflect that hidden in the substratum of society lie forces which—given such an opportunity as might be created by war or famine—would rend the present political fabric to shreds; and that not by the sword of the Communist, but by an accidental majority in the House of Commons. Such a contingency, it is true, may be regarded as highly improbable. Not, however, as quite beyond the range of the possible. So long as the country prospers, and food can be procured by honest labour, the temper of the average Briton may continue placid enough. Vary, however, the little comforts of the proletariat, dock the profit of the small shopkeeper, and a peril will appear imminent for all that is. It may be urged, when a people is strong, God-fearing, and self-respecting, that liberty based on law can never degenerate into license. Suppose, however, that the power of volition remains, whilst the check imposed by religion is annihilated, and as a consequence sensuality depicts itself to the ill-tutored imagination as the supreme good; when indeed the consequences to law and order, to faith and refinement, must be most serious. The element of fixity, when it was too little, might be discovered to be the very oxygen of the political atmosphere. Men of culture would revolt from the pernicious elasticity of popular rule in the direction of a cruel Cæsarism. Any alternative would seem preferable to the spectacle of the holy, the beautiful, the true, trampled under foot of the insensate and ignorant pearls beneath the swine's cloven hoof. We have no intention of arguing that all change is in itself an evil. On the contrary, let us be freely and loyally admitted that some change is a mixed, some unmixed, good. It remains a self-evident truth that we cannot stop the course of the seasons; that, however agreeable it would be

to live under the sun of a perpetual summer, we must accept winter as an ugly necessity. For all that, the declension from riches to indigence could hardly be regarded as advantageous, beyond the range, at all events, of cynics and stoics. The decidence of a giant oak, whose branches afforded pleasure to the eyes of a hundred generations, though but the debt due to time, would rejoice the heart only of the jaundiced. There exist still, and there ever will be, iconoclasts and destructives, souls whose rudder is prejudice or jealousy. Let them nevertheless be priced by the motive which directs their course of action.

It was the fortune of the writer to travel recently in the company of three highly intelligent commercial men, whose conversation was conducted in such a tone as to force itself upon his observation. The theme of their discourse turned upon the purchase of a large property in North Britain by a member of their own class. The estate in question is historic. Its name has been immortalised in verse. The race whose improvidence exhausted it is far more ancient than the institutions of Scotland herself. By the fatal click of the auctioneer's hammer priceless acres of forest and heather passed from them into the possession of—a trader.

The above facts are simple enough, and the moral they convey against extravagance is too trite to need enforcement. An honourable and generous soul, implete with commiseration for the fallen family, must needs have confessed that the man who, with the honours of a thousand ancestors thick upon him, could yet be sufficiently base to squander the heritage they had left to his stewardship, deserved the pangs of penury, the contempt of his order. These gentlemen of the market, however, seemed to view the matter in a totally different light. Regarding, as it appeared, the ancient nobility and gentry of these realms as so many foemen, they made no secret of the joy they felt that the lands which belonged to the old blood, and the stately home where that old blood had been nourished, should have at last been gripped by one of themselves, a man of hard bargains, of rags, contangoes, and all the rest of the jargon of speculation. Beelzebub could not have chuckled more complacently over the ruin of a soul, nor could his fallen angels have expressed in warmer terms their admiration of the 'cleverness'—to use the euphemism for low cunning now in popular vogue—of their master, than these men of the same successful quality in the purchaser of the estates of a once revered race. With fervent energy they one and all belauded the smartness of this creature, till the thought forced itself uppermost, how did he contrive to amass such a mountain of wealth? The reflection was not reassuring. In the old days of British commerce the merchant was a man deservedly honoured in his generation. He did not rise to sudden wealth by one grand equivocal *coup*. Now, however, we have changed

all that. It is no longer customary to ascend the ladder by slow and laborious gradations. Your successful man floats a few companies, constructed on principles similar to those which Mr. Plimsoll denounces in ship-building. In one word, they are designed to sink. Or perchance, if more ambitious, he projects an Esquimaux or Patagonian Loan, the proceeds whereof are sufficient to buy up many ancient estates. It may be that his *cleverness* is such as to gull half a dozen *bonâ-fide* gentlemen of sterling honour, who become his dupes, and, whilst he enjoys a reputation for the chiefest of virtues—success, reap a harvest of disgrace and loss. There is no saying, after all, whether your eminent gentleman of the market deserves, on strict moral grounds, to hold these noble acres any more than their tortured original proprietor, who has been forced by voracious mortgagees to sell.

At the same time, common sense and political economy both declare loudly against the fallacy of permitting an estate to remain over-burdened with onerous liabilities. Such a state of things is injurious to the tenants and their dependents, and operates also most prejudicially against the proper cultivation of the soil. In a country where bread and meat are none too plentiful, the enrichment of the ground is of prime importance. When, therefore, the estate is eaten up—in other words, when the fool or madman of the family comes into possession—the fee-simple must inevitably change hands. There are those who will detest the former freeholders, and eulogise the meritorious enterprise of the financial magnate who occupies their territorial throne. Others again, ourselves among the number, take a different and more righteous view. The fact, however, remains beyond the region of sentiment. The lands are paid for, though it be with dented coin. 'The old order ceaseth, giving place to new.' There is no disputing the hard logic. Welcome as best you may the coming, speed the parting, lord. Tears, idle tears, will not restore one flower of the mountain heather, one frond of the loved brake-fern, one pine on the hill-side, one beech of the woodland. For the ostracised race the poetry of centuries is past, the prose of an evil cycle begins.

A question here arises—and it has never, as far as the writer is cognisant, been broached before—would it not be compatible with strict justice and the true principles of economy to spare a fraction, not for the spendthrift, at least for his despoiled posterity, for the men who bear his name? If you needs must fell the tree as an offering to your great god Shylock, is it too much of your charity to log for the stump?

In more prosaic language, these unalterable Medo-Persic laws of supply and demand, which require the surrender of acres virtually forfeited, lest the food supply of the country should be impaired, could not be infringed were the old home preserved to the old name.

not. Swindlers might kill the deer, turn the beech-trees into
enrage the town of Sevenoaks, and infuriate the county
and then, unless he actually pulled down the ancestral home
Dorsets, he would have done his little pitiful worst. So if
public are concerned, it would be infinitely preferable for the
to belong to the right name, especially if any future possessor
Wyndham type were to be estopped from committing various
injure either house or park. This brings us to our point.

We assert with earnestness born of conviction that the
of all the old landmarks, connected as they are with national
county histories, is nothing short of a public misfortune. A
minded man could contemplate the severance of Hatfield from
Cecil, Belvoir from the Manners, Charlecote from the Lucases,
Wick from the Grevilles, and many hundred other ancient dis-
from names which have grown into every stone, without a
intense sorrow, of bitter mortification. The writer may be
for asserting that his own mind ranges perforce in the direction
the ruins of what once was the home of a Cavalier, his own mind
The angle of a lofty wall still remains to show how bravely
mansion was defended for the king against Fairfax; but the
glorious stones have, alas, passed away from the possession of
lanc Cavalier's family. The fee-simple was alienated by a madman
subsequently demised all he possessed, including invaluable
records, to his servant. What has happened to a *gens* in
beyond the limits of a brace of counties might occur to the
name is graven on the pages of English history. Our argu-
of the kind termed *a fortiori*, i.e. that if that be a cruelty and
which affects the insignificant, it follows that it would be even
if applied to those in a higher sphere.

Perhaps the best illustration of the *modus* we would venture to propose as a preservative for ancient landmarks will be supplied by the demesne of Blenheim. The Marlborough family, for all practicable and reasonable ends, *owns* that great palace whose nomenclature is derived from the victory which sheds its lustre on their name. They enjoy possession, if not quite as arbitrarily as Mr. Tompkins in Tompkins Hall, or Alderman Tallow in Greasian Court, yet as fully as our gracious Sovereign in Windsor Castle. We dare assert that no living English nobleman or gentleman of honour desires to hold sway over his home to the detriment of his heirs. We dare assert, moreover, that—give them but the chance—ninety-nine representatives of ancient houses out of every hundred would gladly submit to any pecuniary sacrifice, could they but insure the treasured court, castle, or house against the horror—however remote—of alienation.

That such a privilege might be granted without injury to the community at large, we submit as a problem the conclusion whereof is fairly established in our own mind. But we would emphatically restrict such a privilege to the right sort, and the right sort only. Had Daylesford been irremovably locked up in the clutches of the Muggins, or whoever he was, who happened to buy it from the Hastings family, poor Warren Hastings could not have recovered possession of that loved demesne of his ancestors. Hence to sow inalienability broadcast would prove alike prejudicial and pernicious. An avenue would be opened to enable Swindle the promoter not only to fasten himself like a poisonous fungus on the soil of Britain, but even to defraud his creditors. The creation of a privilege in a free country must both be of the nature of an exception, and also so fully merited as to be justifiable on moral grounds. It is because we do not believe that the British public is so bilious as to regard with complacency the transfer of Blenheim to a Manchester spinner, or Strathfieldsaye to a Birmingham hardware man, that we venture to urge the propriety of giving effect to a righteous popular sentiment.

To descend to detail :

We propose that the lord of an ancient mansion or place of historic interest, which has been held by his family—in the male line *as a rule* : there might be some few exceptions—for at least three centuries, should be permitted to convey, in lieu of any existent entail, the fee-simple to the Crown, which, in return for a certain sum—say one-third of the value of the house and surrounding demesne—should grant it for ever to the heir-at-law of the existing owner by the tenancy known as grand serjeanty, *i.e.* the performance of some easy and nominal service, such as, for example, the presentation of a banner at the coronation of each fresh monarch. A commission might be appointed to sit for a term of years in order to

decide on the validity of the claims of various applicants; and the sum thereby realised might be applied towards the reduction of the National Debt. Thus the country would gain—for a privilege priceless could only be purchased at a heavy cost—whilst it would be a sublime satisfaction to all who cherish the memory of the home of their ancestors to feel that, by a compact with the national honour, that home, be it castle, tower, hall, court, house, or but an ivy-clad ruin, was for ever safe from profanation. This, we affirm, is a real and not a shoddy, sentiment. It has animated poets; it has inspired the warrior and the statesman. Political economy may frown upon it. But then the precepts of that exactest of sciences are based upon the supposition that man is a mere bartering animal, without the adjunct of a soul.

There are those who would argue that the above privilege, if granted at all, should be conceded only as the appanage of a title. To this we reply, that as a matter of fact many of the most interesting relics of antiquity in these realms are now held, and have been held from time immemorial, by grand old families, who have cared little for any further embellishment than their own name, which has been known for centuries as a household word in their respective counties. The distribution, too, of titles has got to be excessive. The ancient and, in its earlier days, glorious order of baronets has become degraded by perpetual connection with civic vulgarities. Peerages are created with such reckless profusion, and so entirely without the 'nonsense of merit,' that we may soon expect as many lords in London as there are generals in the United States. For one great genius such as Lytton or Macanlay, for one hero such as Hardinge or Gough, fifty peerages are flung away upon lawyers who 'leave not a wrack behind' them, as regards fame; upon Secretaries of State whose very names are so little that they will lack a record on the pages of English history. Assuredly to offer an additional inducement to facile Premiers to lavish honours which should be given grudgingly, and only to the highest and most representative men in thought or action, would be of all evils most mischievous to the constitution. Besides which, our object is not to manufacture a tinsel aristocracy. Heaven knows we have enough, too much, of that type of sham already! Our desire is simple enough, and far from ignoble. We hold it to be not inconsistent with a nation's historic traditions to preserve what tends to its honour as a people, not merely free but also ancient. For this reason England would suffer were there no longer a Stonor of Stonor, a Pusey of Pusey, a Phelps of Montacute, a Blount of Blount's Court; and were the old seats of those ancient families desecrated by the intrusion of Noakes, a Stokes, a Brown, or a Styles. Noakes, it is true, might be a very much more exalted being than the late Mr. Whitmore Chastleton, for example, who willed to fell the timber environ-

his stately demeane. Noakes may be artist, plutocrat, apostle, humanitarian, anything and everything; but he does not happen to be Whitmore, and he has simply no right to intrude upon the heritage which is baptised with a worthier name. Money already buys too much. It would convey a fine moral lesson were the country to say, 'Thus far, no farther.' Money cannot purchase love, truth, happiness, honour, the manners and tone of thought of a gentleman. Is there any special reason, then, why money should be permitted to make itself ridiculous by playing the rôle of the ass in the lion's skin?

Were the writer placed in the centre of a debating society, he might fairly expect to be simply pelted with objections. Of these almost all would be easily traceable to evil motives, such as jealousy, cupidity, vulgarity, hatred, spite, meanness, and the like. They would need no refutation; nor, indeed, would those which, born of a crude philosophy, denounce every type of privilege, not excluding the right to be seized of freehold, on the broad ground that all property is robbery, and that communism is the regeneration of society and individuals. There remains, however, one practical difficulty, which cannot so readily be met, and at all events courts a candid discussion.

Let us suppose the case of a fool or a madman who, succeeding to the ancient home and acres, falls into evil hands, and sells all that can be sold. On the principle we have inculcated, he would be estopped from alienating the home and its surrounding acreage. He is therefore left, after all else is squandered, a beggar with four walls and a park. Is not this, it may be urged, incongruous, if not positively absurd?

The objection is a fair one; so fair, indeed, that we may meet it quite half way by a free admission that the position of so intoxicated a spendthrift is incongruous, nay, more, if you will, absurd. The man, be he gentle or simple, who plays the fool must invite derision by his folly. He must be content to lie upon the bed he has made. So far as he is concerned, he cannot escape the inevitable. His son, however, be it remembered, or his heir-at-law, may turn out his very opposite. To adopt the beautiful words of the Old Testament, he may do that which is lawful and right. He may earnestly desire to retrieve the lost honour of the family. At all events, however poor he might be, he would start well with a home and a name. The sympathies of all righteous men would be his; and although it often takes a century to recover the ground lost in one mad decade, still the game, however up-hill, would not be altogether desperate. Men of birth and slender means not un-frequently ally themselves to plebeian wealth, and thus the old tree, through the medium of a new graft, brings forth fruit brave as in the days of yore.

Of course, if the writer's premises are altogether wrong-headed, if they are to be confounded with an impossible and vicious ultra-Toryism, if it is to be desired that the venerable homes of England should change hands, then the conclusion drawn is fallacious and ridiculous. One thing, however, seems tolerably self-evident—to wit, that if the old blood, which loved the people and the people loved, dies out, or is bought up by leviathan land-purchasers, we are not far from the red haven which the sciolist desires as the *ne plus ultra* of human happiness. The sympathy between the old squires and the toilers of the field was acute. Your modern investor in land regards those beneath him in the light of so many factory operatives—they are mere chattels in the labour-market. They are not to him the direct descendants of the brave troopers whom his ancestor led at Edgehill, for the simple reason that, if he had an ancestor at all, said party was probably engaged in blacking boots or sweeping chimneys whilst that eventful engagement was raging. Destroy the genuineness of human sympathy, and all territorial rights must be resented in the long-run as intolerable usurpations. In that event fate would engulf mercilessly both the noblest of noble and gentlest of gentle, and also Mr. Swindle with his chum Tompkins and the newly-baroneted Alderman Tallow. The one splendid feature in communism is its perfect impartiality. It holds as a foe not solely the gentleman, but equally the merchant, the shopkeeper, the huckster, any and every proprietor of any and every thing. It may or may not be a *reductio ad absurdum* of our fraction of the kosmos. But it is, at all events, honest and foursquare. Nay more, it is clear-headed enough to condemn the sophistry which would rob an ancient race of their ancestral home, in order to exalt a *rem quomodo* upstart. Those who object to so simple and righteous a measure as the retention for old families of the nooks of Old England which have been hallowed for them by long centuries of splendid associations, may perhaps be surprised to learn that the principle upon which they base their arguments must, if pushed to their philosophical extreme, justify nothing short of the most naked, crude levelling communism.

THE AWAKENING OF SPRING

BLESSING the vale, a softer breath
Dawns on the wintry night of death ;
 Birds, meadows, trees resume
The joy wherewith of old they laugh'd,
And life from sunlit heavens quaff'd,
 Till Autumn gather'd gloom.

Dear is the fern's uncurling green,
Dear the white elm-buds sparkling keen
 Athwart the living blue ;
Promise and Hope move hand-in-hand,
Fair twins, throughout a flow'r-starr'd land,
 Zephyrs their steps pursue.

The hedgehog turns within his bed
Of leaves beneath the thorn-bush spread,
 To find his dreams fulfill'd ;
Glad swallows twitter round young Spring,
And joyous carol, twinkling wing,
 Tell where the linnets build.

Now Fancy rouses, many a shape
Of beauty born she hastes to drape
 With words that, soaring strong,
Rise heav'nward first, and thence descend
On kindly souls which love to blend
 Their sympathies with song.

To nature's gladness Mem'ry blind
Calls buried Springs once more to mind,
 And mourns time's rolling flood ;
But soon, lest churlish she should prove,
Where all around smiles endless love,
 Thaws to a genial mood.

THE AWAKENING OF SPRING

And yet old melodies are dear—
Old thrush-songs—unto manhood's ear,
 And sweet is many a thought
Snatch'd from past Springs. Ah, sweeter than
Smelt violets in our native glen
 Than those late Aprils brought!

And will the cuckoo's accents fling
Such glamour round this new-born Spring
 As when fond Fancy strays
Where, careless boys, we roam'd the glades?
How soon the keenest joy now fades!
 How long were boyhood's days!

No matter; thankful while 'tis ours
To stray with unabated powers
 Through gleams of Paradise,
We'll mark the year's bright flowers expand,
And joy with all the happy land
 Amidst some nat'ral sighs.

M. G. WATKINS, M.A.

THE FAMILY GHOST

It was winter-time, somewhere about Christmas, when a snug party of tired hunters were assembled about a roaring fire of logs, enjoying the generous hospitality of the master of the hounds. A hard day's hunting over the mountain slopes had somewhat wearied them all; conversation languished a little, for everybody was more disposed to listen than talk. The village doctor, however, was free from this lull, as he had only joined the party at the dinner-table. He was a lively little Welshman, full of shrugs and gestures, with a fresh ruddy face, in which good-humour contended with touchiness.

'Come, tell us a story, Evans,' said the master, suddenly rousing him from a gentle doze, and slapping the doctor vigorously on the knee, 'we're all going to sleep.'

The doctor required a little pressing. He professed himself at a loss for a subject. Like the celebrated Knife-grinder, he had nothing to tell. 'Unless, gentlemen, you would like me to tell you about the difficulty I have in getting my bills in.' At this there was a general murmur of dissent. 'Shall I tell you, then, of the ghost that was seen by William Griffith Jones?'

The subject seemed a promising one, especially as the hero of the story was present, a young Welsh squire of shy and retiring habits, who was more devoted to the ancient customs of his race than to modern culture. 'It is not right, indeed,' he remonstrated. His protest was unheeded, and the doctor began:

'I don't think,' he said, spreading out his hands to the blaze of the fire, 'that we Welsh are superstitious. There was a good deal of it once, but not now. It is only here and there, among our old old-fashioned families, such as that of our friend Jones here of the Plas, that you meet with some old stories belonging to them. It is said, for instance, that the family of the Plas have a tradition that on certain occasions a white horse appears to some one of their members, foreboding death or heavy misfortune. Well, whatever reason may tell us, there is no doubt that these things have a great influence on the mind; and William here was never free from a certain amount of dread of some day seeing this appalling vision. When he visited our little town, and spent an evening with a friend, he objected very much to going home alone. He was brave enough by daylight; but when night came on, and he had the prospect of facing the dark way to the Plas, his courage failed him, and he earnestly begged for company. But one murky night last winter

William found himself overtaken by midnight at the house of Morris of the Bryn, at the breaking-up of a little bachelor party. Everybody was moving off in different directions—for Morris was an early man—but no one was going the way of our friend William, and he was afraid to traverse it by himself.

'You must know that William lives at home with his grandmother and his brother John, and that, curiously enough, whilst William is a very good-tempered man, John is not a little quarrelsome. For that reason the two brothers are not always on good terms; and where you see one of them, the other is pretty sure not to be found. Indeed, like our young gentry of days gone by, John is in the habit of roaming about the country, stopping first at one house and then at another, taking free quarters with his brother's tenants, who are not always well pleased to see him. John was not at the party at Morris's, and he and his brother had quarrelled violently that very morning. I have good reason to know that, for it so happened that John had spent the evening with me.

'I left William standing at Morris's door, looking this way and that, and feeling his heart grow weaker and weaker every second; everybody had gone except young Meyrick, who lodged in the town, and he stood on the steps, lighting up his pipe. "I wish you would walk home with me, Meyrick," said Jones; "it's so lonely." Meyrick laughed a sarcastic laugh. "And who shall walk back home with me?" he asked. "Well, you could sleep on a bench in the hall at our house," said William. "I prefer my own feather-bed," replied Meyrick. "But, my good fellow, *do*," said William entreatingly. "Look here, are you hungry?" "Yes, indeed," said Meyrick—for Morris had not given them any supper, and Meyrick had dined early. "Then, if you will come home with me, we will have a capital supper—corned beef and red salmon, and plenty of good ale, with some whisky-punch afterwards—and you shall sleep on the dining-room sofa." Well, that tempted Meyrick.

'The way to the Plas at night is not pleasant. First of all comes the bridge, with the water moaning and whispering down below, and there, you know, it is said that a maid who had been wronged threw herself into the river and was drowned. After that you come to a dark hill-side, where the road winds through a thick wood, just the place for anybody to spring out upon you and murder you; and, when you come out of the wood, you pass between two high rocks, where they say that thieves and robbers were put to death a long while ago. And even then you are a good way from the Plas, that stands in the middle of a grove of trees, and looks wild and ghostly enough itself when you get there.

'It was a tempestuous night; the wind howled savagely, making all kinds of strange noises among the trees; dark as pitch, for the moon would not rise for an hour or more. The two young men

crept quietly along, starting and quivering at every noise. A sheep jumped up before them out of a ditch, and frightened them almost out of their senses. A screech-owl flew over the wood, moaning and shrieking like a child; and then they gave themselves up for lost. But nothing happened, after all, till they had come to the place between the two crags, when in an interval of calm they heard a distant sound from the direction of the Plas. They stopped and listened intently. The sound was approaching; it came nearer and nearer. At last it proved to be the sound of a horse's hoofs. Clop, clop, clop, clop. "What can it be?" said Meyrick, seizing William by the arm. "There can be no horse coming from the Plas at this time of night." William gazed and listened a moment longer, and then began to run as fast as he could in an opposite direction. "Run," he cried in a hoarse whisper to his companion—"run for your life; if it catches us here, we are lost!" They just cleared the rocks as the horse's hoofs echoed hollowly behind them. William jumped into the hedge on one side, and Meyrick on the other. The horse went past like the wind.

"After a while they crawled out. "Did you see it?" whispered William. "I saw something white." "White was it? Are you sure?" "Yes; a white horse." "Then it's all over with one of us; there will be a death in our family within twenty-four hours." "I wish I hadn't come with you," said Meyrick. "Come on," said William, now in quite a fever of excitement. "Dear, I hope it will not be John; and we parted such bad friends!" "John fell out with me to-day too," said Meyrick, "and I threatened to break his head." "Well, let us hope it may be grandmother."

As they approached the Plas the storm increased. The trees were lashing each other fiercely with their leafless branches, and showers of twigs were hurled against their faces. The Plas was all in darkness, and looked so solemn and funereal that they were almost afraid to enter. William went first; then he stopped, and waited for Meyrick. "They say too," he whispered, "that at such time a corpse is seen lying stretched across a bier in the hall; suppose we should see it?" "O, go in," said Meyrick; "let us know the worst at once."

The hall was all in darkness; but William found the matches on the table, and was just going to strike a light, when Meyrick stumbled over something in the hall. "Hang it; a dog!" he cried, and dealt a desperate kick at it. It was a heavy blow, and was followed by a sound of crashing and breaking, and a short sharp cry. "What have I done?" cried Meyrick. "A light! quick!" The light revealed the body of a youth lying apparently lifeless on the floor. William gave a loud shriek. "It is brother John!" he cried. "Meyrick, what have you done? You have killed him." It was the white horse, you see, that would not be denied.

'Well, after a moment's speechless horror, the two young men looked into each other's faces; the same thing had occurred to each. They were both on bad terms with John. They had killed him—they would be seized, condemned, hung. In the flurry of the moment they did not see that the most sensible way would be to give the alarm at once, and explain things. They thought only of concealment. Listening intently, they found that no one was aroused. Then they took up the body by the head and feet, gently carried it to the wood-house, and placing a log against the town, as if it had fallen down, they crept away guiltily towards the town, overpowered with grief and terror. They had not, however, got more than half-way back, before William stopped suddenly, and clasping his hands to his temples, cried, "Meyrick, my hat!" His hat had blown off when they were carrying poor John, and in the excitement he had forgotten all about it. There was nothing for it but they must go back, else they might both suffer.

'They reached the house at last, and crept cautiously round to the yard. The tempest had abated now, and a wan yellow moon showed over the trees. William's hat lay full in the moonlight in the middle of the yard. He had just clutched it, when he heard a noise from the wood-house, and looking up, saw a ghastly figure, having the features of his brother John, but clad all in white, in the very habiliments of the grave. His companion saw it at the same time, and they both darted away at their utmost speed. But the figure, whatever it was, followed them, without sound or apparent motion; each felt that the touch of the spectre was upon him. They reached the town at last. There was a light in my surgery, and for it they made like frightened deer. I must tell you how it was that my surgery was lighted up at that time of night.

'John, as I told you, had spent the evening with me, and I was heartily wishing I could get rid of him, when, as luck would have it, a message came from the quarry to which I am surgeon to call me to see a young man who had fallen and broken some bones. The messenger had come on horseback, and he went on to the Goat, to order a car and horse to take me to the quarry, whilst I put up my instruments and so on. Among other things I took a small bottle of chloric ether, as a stimulant, in case it were required. I couldn't leave John in the house, and so I took him with me. We reached the quarry, and I attended to the young man, leaving John in the car, and, as it happened, the bottle of ether too. It was a cold night, and John, seeing the little case-bottle, thought it contained spirits, and, first testing it with his nose, applied his mouth to it, and took a good pull at it.

'When I returned to the car, I found the bottle empty, and John lying at the bottom of the car fast asleep. Fortunately, as it seemed at the time, he had not drunk enough to do him serious

harm, but the effect was as if he were intoxicated, and it would be best for him to sleep it off. But as we were driving homewards it occurred to me that I would not like to have him at my house any longer, and as it was not far out of my way to go round by the Plas, I determined to leave him there. When I reached the house, every one was in bed, and not to be awakened. I made up a sort of nest for master John, with mats and rugs, upon the hall-floor, and drove homewards through the avenue, the white horse in the car showing conspicuously against the dark background of the night, and frightening our friend William and his companion, as I have told you. And that was how the accident happened to poor John. When I reached home I had some medicine to make up, and hence the light in the surgery.

'Well, not to keep you any longer in suspense, I may tell you that John was not killed—not even seriously hurt, and what happened to him in the wood-house he told me afterwards, and it pleased me so much that I will tell you all about it.

'He had not been long in the wood-house when the cold brought him to his senses. He was under the impression at first that he was still in the car, and that some one was leaning heavily upon him. That was the log, you remember, that they had placed against him. Well, he gave a violent push, the log fell to the ground, and he rose to his feet quite bewildered as to where he was. Seeing, however, the moonlight shining through a chink in the door, he made towards it, and tried to pull the door open. But the log he had pushed off him had jammed itself against the door, and it was immovable. Then it struck him that he was in prison. This narrow confined place, out of which it was impossible to get, must be a cell of the police lock-up. He had been riotous in his cups, no doubt, and the police had taken him up. He was very indignant at first that he, a gentleman's son, should be treated so, and he hammered violently at the door for some time, and shook it; but finding that nobody took any notice of him, he made up his mind to go to bed.

'Feeling about with his hands, he discovered a kind of ledge on a heap of roots, where they had been taken away for household consumption. It was more on the level than you might suppose, the twigs and fragments and chips from the chopping filling up the crevices. Still it could not have been very soft. But John thought that it was the prison couch, and took off his things, down to his shirt and drawers. Then he crept into bed, but found everything very uneasy. "They don't shake their flocks out in prison, anyhow," was his first muttered thought, as he felt the sharp ends of the roots against his bones. "This is the worst bed I ever was in; I'm hanged if they don't stuff their bolsters with chips! And they are sparing of their blankets, too," he said to himself, groping here and there in vain for the bedclothes. "Hi! police,

police!" he shouted, "come and make my bed properly." But nobody came; and then, in trying to make himself more comfortable, he seized a projecting roct, and pulling violently at it, he brought down a whole shower of lumps of spiky wood upon him. He could endure no more, but jumped up, and seizing the first thing that came to hand, which happened to be the log lying against the door, he began to lay about him violently, intending to break everything in the cell. The log having been removed, however, the door began to swing quietly open by its own weight, letting in a bright flood of moonlight. "Diaoul!" cried John, pleased, but frightened, at the result of his exertions, "I've broken out of the lock-up; I must run for it now." It was then that William saw the ghost.

'Away went John, and away went William and Meyrick pell mell; but poor John thought that the doctor's stuff he now remembered to have swallowed had turned his brain. For, although he knew quite well that he was running from the lock-up to his own home, and every step of the way was familiar to him, yet the evidence of his senses seemed to show just the contrary, and everything came to him back end foremost. There were the crags and the avenue and the bridge, but all in the wrong order; and the police too, instead of their pursuing him, it seemed as if he were after them—two flying policemen dashing along at their utmost speed in front of him. How they did run, those nimble constables! "They're trying to cut off my retreat," said John himself; "but I'll outpace them." For liberty is sweet, and the faster they ran the faster ran John, till at last they all burst in at my surgery-door, one on the top of the other, frightening me into fits, waking up the baby and Mrs. Evans, and setting all the dogs round about barking like mad. There, gentlemen.'

'But,' said one of the company, 'how was it he could run like that after the kick he'd had?'

'The grandmother's best bonnet came in for that. A careless servant had left it in the bandbox upon the hall-floor, and it was found with the occipital part of it frightfully fractured. How did your grandmother take it, William?' asked the doctor, turning to the hero of his tale, who had followed its progress with rapt attention, making only occasional gestures of dissent.

'Well, indeed,' replied William cheerfully, 'she was thankful it was no worse.'



George Kirby, del

C. M. Jenkin, scul

THE DUENNA OUTWITTED

THE DUENNA OUTWITTED

A Romance

Of wary duennas could none
With aged Sofia compare ;
Throughout all Seviglia not one
As Donna Sabilla was fair ;
Alfonso too woo'd with persistency rare.

To vespers went matron and maid,
No voice on the soft summer wind ;
Full in front, of marauders afraid,
Look'd Sofia—but never behind ;
To all circumspection judicially blind.

By the light of yon tremulous star
A palm was extended—a kiss !—
While Sofia look'd forward afar,
Nor mark'd that ephemeral bliss :
'The sign of my lifelong devotion, love, this !'

A sign preconcerted, though love
Could alone its significance guess ;
But the star looking down from above
Saw Alfonso the augury bless ;
For he knew that his Donna Sabilla meant 'Yes.'

It crown'd the ambitions of life ;
It hush'd, with its magical spell,
Into calm all his feverish strife ;
What marvel his bosom should swell
As forth went those twain call'd by soft vesper-bell ?

Next evening, Sofia's regard
Around was as anxiously thrown ;
And forward, across the greensward,
She sped to sing vespers—*alone* !
Her ward with persistent Alfonso had flown.

MAURICE DAVIES.

BRIGHTON REMINISCENCES

NO. I. DOING GOOD BY STEALTH.

Few things gave more delight to an 'Illustrious Personage,' when at the Brighton Pavilion at the beginning of the present century, than to get away from all the frolickings of his own 'set,' far out along the coast, dressed in attire too shabby for his own tradesmen to wear, because they would have thought it indicated rapidly-approaching bankruptcy. A dress for such excursions, or 'caliph wanderings,' as he called them, alluding to the *Arabian Nights*, was provided; it had never been made for him, being bought for his occasional use, by one of his companions recently dead, at some Hebrew repository, 'ready made,' the instructions being to get such a suit as an inferior tradesman would think the right thing for Sunday use. The cut was not that of a Stultz; the material was not superfine; altogether it was just what it was intended to be—a disguise. The long and loose coat hid the form of the wearer, and the low-crowned, wide-brimmed hat, large enough to come well down over the brow, concealed much of the upper portion of the face, while a 'Belcher handkerchief' served to cover the lower.

Drab kerseymere continuations, 'a world too wide,' hid the well-formed limbs, and a pair of artificially cracked brown-topped boots, each with a very unnecessary patch upon its outer side, clumsily sewn on, and with space inside for the accommodation of any number of 'corns'—had the wearer been troubled with such excrescences to his feet—never polished, but looking as if some large dog made them his bed and pillow, were parts of the costume. The heels had been carefully rasped down on the outside to imitate hard wear, and as if to indicate a want of funds for mending. The tops were well rubbed with a piece of brick, as if to show the chafing of stirrup-leathers, and to hint that the owner had at one time ridden, though reduced to his own legs now. The brown tops had been once polished; but no old painting was or could be worse cracked in all directions—they seemed to be nothing but cracks. Without a dirtyish red waistcoat such a full dress would scarcely have been complete; but that deficiency was not permitted; one was found, double-breasted, with many pockets outside and in, and with large glaring mother-of-pearl buttons. It looked like a target with many bull's-eyes when the coat was not buttoned, but that was not often. An old-fashioned metal watch with a 'chagreen' cover, the cases of which might have served as a warming-pan and a frying-pan also, if a dinner were cooked *al fresco*—with a chain that might have been the end of a cable;

and seals that might have each broken a man's head, five or six of them; and a key with a square plate of cornelian, or something like it, off which a man might have dined had dinner plates been scarce—swung before the kerseymeres; a load that a porter would have thought heavy enough. But that was the style of the age; and what will not men endure for fashion's sake?

A huge pair of white metal spectacles was provided, but only worn when in places where there was more than ordinary risk of recognition. There was no danger of breaking the frame; the difficulty was to find a nose capable of bearing the weight; they were of the kind commonly called 'goggles.' Whether when behind them a man could see was doubtful, but that he could not be seen was certain; they effectually hid the eyes and their expression, which are bad tell-tales of identity.

'What do you say to a country stroll to-morrow?' said the Prince to Arthur de Vere. 'You and I only, I mean. I shall go *en musti*, so must you; nobody must know us. You must be my son. I have got a very fatherly wig.'

'Should like nothing better,' was the prompt answer.

'Good; then be it so. My name is John Biggs. You are christened after your father. Biggs is a useful name, and there are no Biggses about this part of the country; we shall have no claimants to relationship which might not be convenient. What time shall we start?'

'You had better name the hour, father; I will be ready.'

'Very good, my son; say eight. You will breakfast with me in my snuggerly; I will be ready also. But you must go presently and hire a sort of tradesman's cart, with a stout cobby-looking horse that can jog along at a farmer's pace. You must drive out some little distance on the road towards Lewes, and overtake me. You will have to get some clothes too; your own won't do.'

'Sunday clothes?' said Arthur.

'Yes; such clothes as the louts wear on Sundays about here will do; but where to get them is the difficulty.'

'I know; leave all that to the cook.'

'That is well. I think there is a man who sells everything, though he has but a small shop to hold it all, at the north end of the town, opposite a public-house called the Anchor and Rope—'

'Anchor and Hope, perhaps; or Hope and Anchor, which is it?' said Arthur.

'Hope and Anchor it is; you are quite right. How nice it is to have a son that is sharp and clever! I have no doubt the man will lend his horse and cart.'

'If he won't I'll steal them,' said Arthur.

'Dangerous that, my boy; the brutal laws we have hang people for horse-stealing. I don't know what is done for cart-stealing. We

will change all that some day. He will lend it for a consideration. Here is my purse—O, stay; that is the empty one. I am obliged to carry two—one full, or as full as I can get it; the other empty. My friends have driven me to that necessity; they are so afflicted with the cacoethes for borrowing they used to empty my purse every day, not being troubled with the disease of returning. So I conceived the notion of keeping two purses—one for myself, the other for my friends. When they come now to borrow, I take out the empty one and shake it at them; it is an answer in full to all demands, and I find the applications less frequent. The notion was not so very bad, considering who got it up; the only regret I have is that I did not invent it sooner—it would have saved me much. Now I hear them sometimes say, “George is awake to the borrowing dodge; he never ‘puts money in his purse’ now.” They have not found out that I have a purse for my friends’ especial use. I was at first quite surprised to find how long a purse of money would last without friendly aid.’

Arthur laughed, and the Prince went on:

‘One of my *dearest* friends used frequently to say, in a sort of rapture, “After all, what would the world be without friendship?” I learned that exclamation by heart; it was so often said that it sank deeply into my heart, the more so because it always heralded an approach to me, and a whisper, “My dear George, pray lend me,” &c. Since I shook the empty purse at him the third time, I have never heard him ask what the world would be without friendship; he seems to think the world would get on as well without as with it. Once I heard him growl, “There is *no* friendship in the world *now*.” That was the day he left for London, and I have no doubt was the cause of his journey—it was the day after the third shake of the empty purse. There is great virtue in an empty purse; it saves talking—nothing seems to be so convincing—and it lies in your pocket so conveniently to your hand, the heavy purse naturally sinks to the bottom by the laws of gravitation. Newton would have found out all about gravity with a full purse and an empty one better than with an apple.’

‘I will be off to find a cart,’ said Arthur, after another laugh.

And he soon returned with an assurance that carts were plentiful; everybody seemed to have one, and all were ready to fight who should let their carts first. They were to be let at all prices, from six shillings per diem upwards.

‘Ah, the rascals don’t pay duty,’ said the Prince, laughing. ‘Tradesmen complain of being cheated, but really the way in which a king is cheated is something serious. Nobody thinks it a sin to cheat him. Were all the losses calculated at the end of the year, the sum-total would frighten a king into the *Gazette*. It is a won-

or how a king can live and pay his way. A prince can't be expected to do it. What do you think, Arthur ?

'Am I speaking to John Biggs the elder, or to the Prince ?'

'Yes ; Biggs of course : but little difference that makes to you, fancy. You ought to evince respect to your father, though.'

'There is one prince I know whom, if anybody expect *him* to pay his way, the said anybody would not be "blessed"—rather he would be "disappointed."'

'I expected that, or something very like it. Aware of my own inability, I once made an appeal to my father. I thought as his wants were fewer than mine he might have saved money. He refused, however, telling me my brothers would expect him to do the same thing for them. There seems to be ill fortune in having brothers, though they are good fellows, and you are the eldest. The good people sang a song about the matter. I heard it at the corners of streets in London : thus,

"To pay your debts myself indeed
I should be much to blame, sir ;
For Frederick and all the rest
Would ask the very same, sir.
Bow, wow, wow,
Fal de riddle, diddle diddle, bow, wow, wow !"

Think of that. Was that not enough to afflict the heart of a susceptible prince ? I thought I should never have recovered it—such a shock to a system already impaired with grief.'

The Prince sang in the style of a street ballad-monger—his mimicry was always inimitable—and the serio-comic expression of his face was sufficient to make a less mirthful person than De Vere indulge in laughter ; and he did laugh till his eyes were suffused.

'You seem to be amused at my misfortunes,' said the Prince.

'I am. You are a "merrie" prince, whether you will be a "merrie monarch" or not.'

The Prince instantly gave a perfect imitation of the singing of a lady known to Arthur, who sang with an unsophisticated lisp, and a favourite ditty of hers contained the words, 'I am always saddest whene'er I sing,' which the lady rendered, 'I am alwaythe thaddetht rhene'er I thing.' The imitation of voice and accent was so genuine, so ludicrous, that the young sailor could not restrain his admiration or his cachinnations ; at last he exclaimed, as soon as breath permitted :

'If you would go upon the stage and sing those songs, you might pay all your debts, and have money to spare.'

'So I have been told—not in the singing line, but acting generally, in light comedy—but the *infra dig.* has to be considered. If 't be true that "uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," I fancy might be made uneasier by the reflection that it had formerly

earned crowns by mimicry. I had a friend—now gone where all good friends go, I hope and pray—who, whenever any proposition was laid before him, used to say, "Yes, in that light it looks well, but let us turn it round the other way, and see how it looks then." Like him, I like to look at things in all lights. I do not always do so, I confess, for I am impulsive; but my very neglect of doing so shows me the necessity for doing it. Of course, the notion of my making money in that way is too absurd to be entertained, save as a joke; but there are other ways sometimes placed before me that would make much, and though they would serve my purpose they would give pain to those I love, and who love me more than I deserve. I would not pain one of them to gain a world. I have pained them enough by getting into debt—I will not pain them more to get out of it.'

'It was only as a joke I spoke of it,' said Arthur, sorry that he had done so.

'I knew that. I am now referring to other propositions of a very different kind often made to me, which would be enormously lucrative, almost fabulously so—gigantic fortunes might be realised, but involving dishonour. That I never have done. Knowingly I never in my life acted dishonourably; we none of us know how we may be led into temptation—we cannot know how we shall step out of it—I hope I never shall be so led. We are all weak; our strength is but weakness. I know it—in my better moments I deplore it; but weakness returns, and weakness is more powerful than strength. I do not often talk thus; I now do it for your sake. You are young, you are in the midst of temptations; avoid the first yielding: after that there is rarely any redemption. I have seen no indication of yielding in you as yet; if I had I should have banished you from the temptations. But I have hope of you; if you can stand the tests to which you are put here, you can bear aught that may come. Still remember, and think of it only as kindness—the first day you show symptoms of yielding is your last day here.'

'I shall go before that yielding comes. The first moment I feel the desire to yield I shall hoist the "Blue Peter," and be under way without a word. My departure will speak for itself; you will need no explanation.'

'That will be the better way. We now understand each other fully. I want you to leave me as uncorrupted in mind, heart, and principles as you came to me. God strengthen and bless you. I lay open my weaknesses to you to give you strength; that is my sole object.'

'I feel that it is so, Prince. I thank you for it. If I yield or feel the desire to yield, it will be no fault of yours. "On my head be it," as the Moslems say, and, barring the name, they are as good Christians as are to be found here in Christian England.'

'We breakfast at seven, remember. I must slip out while the others are taking their morning meal. My man will report me imposed till our dinner, which will be postponed, for once, one hour. All morning we shall have no opportunity of speaking; but all is understood, and you, I know, will be punctual.'

'As time itself, "Imshallah!" as the Moslems say again.'

'How do you translate that?'

'With the will of God.'

'Good. Repeat the word again, if you please. I should like to remember it.'

It was done, and they separated. The next morning, both appearing as the timepiece chimed the hour, they breakfasted; and Arthur went for the cart, while the sturdy Mr. John Biggs slowly walked on the road, to be taken up as soon as might be. When they were fairly seated and upon their way, Mr. Biggs said, 'I did not tell you the object of my excursion to-day; I will now. When I was last on a strolling excursion, I was led by my companion—who is now no more—down the road we are now pursuing; and after we had stabled our horse, we lounged about the cliffs and descended upon the beach, where we saw a curious sort of cot, built in a nook formed by an angle in the cliffs; where dwelt a fisherman and his family, one of whose children had just died of fever, and others were lying ill, and, so far as I and my friend could judge, very likely to follow the departed one. The father had been first stricken; as he believed, he had taken the infection at a place inland whither he had gone to sell his fish, and he had had the disease fearfully, but was, when we called there, past the crisis, and with proper treatment would certainly recover health and strength.

'With the poor, when the power of labour is interrupted the means of subsistence cease. I never saw, and could not conceive, a case of such utter destitution. The parish dole was a scanty one, and it was easy to perceive that to take it was painful to the recipients. Here was work set before me. The wife had, when her husband had ceased to labour, sold for a mere trifle all he could spare—even to bedding. I had learned from the habits and practice of my father and mother to sympathise with and to relieve distress; but such distress as I then saw I had never encountered. I was puzzled. My friend, though a kindly fellow at heart, was useless as an aid and as an adviser. He could only suggest what had in fact been urged by others who knew the poor family—the instant removal of the whole of them to the parish receptacle. But that step was not only repugnant, I may say revolting, to the feelings of both man and wife, but there was the certainty—humanly speaking, at least—that as regarded two of the children the removal would cause death. To that I could not listen.

'I took off my hat and well scratched my head. That seems

to be a natural resource when ideas are absent. I have seen people do it, and wondered why; but after that day I ceased to feel surprised at the act. As I furiously scratched dim notions came, which assumed clearness as they sprang into light. I said to myself, "There is no help for you"—meaning myself. "You must help yourself;" and I got away up the cliff and walked faster than I had ever walked before towards Lewes. On the road I was overtaken by a butcher in his cart. I hailed him, and asked for a ride. He gave it cheerfully, and I revealed my errand—the distress of the family and my own distress at not knowing what to do in the matter, and how to do it. "Well, you see, sir," said the butcher, "if so be as there was money, all the rest would be smoke. I'd lend my horse and cart to take over all that is wanted. I'd drive it over myself. I could buy cheap beds and bedding—everything, in short. But there's that infernal money—where is that to come from?" "Here," I said, "in my pocket. I have enough to pay for all that is necessary, I think. If not, I can get more at Brighton, and John Biggs will be answerable for all that may be supplied hereafter."

"Now I sees my way out of the wood," said the butcher. "I'll go to work—you'll see if I don't. I've had a family down with the fever. I knows what's what, and what must be had, and what can be done without. The grand thing is to have money enough, and not to spend more than will do. We must take over a nurse. I know one—a rare sort she is—one as never drinks, and don't take snuff. She is up to all the dodges of fever too, and will make it fly double-quick. See if she don't."

"Well, we ran about from one shop to another, I finding money and suggesting. Some of my suggestions were overruled, but the practical good sense of the butcher, his wife, and the nurse was far beyond mine. I yielded gratefully. I worked very hard that day, but I had the great satisfaction of seeing the family made thoroughly comfortable, and well provided with all things, before I went back to Brighton. My friend was electrified—he declared he never thought such energy and such forethought were in me, and only lamented that John Biggs had the credit of all. Could he have had his way, all the newspapers in England would have filled their columns full of pæans in praise and honour of somebody else.

"A laughable thing occurred that day. I said something in the form of a proposition for increasing the comforts of the family, to which the butcher said, in his blunt way, "Poof, poof! that's too much. Mustn't make 'em think they're gentlefolks or nobility;" and he explained what I wished to do to his wife, who, equally plain, said, "Fiddlesticks! Why, sir, if they was king and queen, and the children princes and princesses, they couldn't have more than that. I don't s'pose that prince over there at the 'Vilion ever had such luxuries as that, and they say he has everything gold can buy.

“He be bound *he* wouldn't do a hundredth part o' what you've done for them poor things. Not he; he thinks only of hisself. Pity that he had the fever in that there bit of a hovel too, that's hardly good enough for a pigstye. That would bring his pride down, and bring him to his senses.”

“You do not appear to esteem royalty,” I observed quietly.

“Not I. No patience wi' 'em. To have such want and sickness and death here so near, and never come or send to ask how the poor things is.”

“Perhaps he might, if he knew it.”

“Not he; he thinks too much of hisself. He'd never do good to nobody.”

Months afterwards, when the family had recovered, and the father had resumed his occupation—which he did *con amore*, for he loved it, and could not be idle; his wish was to live, and to bring up his family without assistance from any one; he even hoped to repay John Biggs what he had expended for him and them—I went down, and was talking to him on the beach, when the wind, which was what you sailors call a stiff breeze, took a liberty with me. It blew off my hat first, and my wig afterwards. The fisherman stared. But that was not all. There were two or three persons on the beach who knew me, and instantly took off their hats. Nor could I prevail upon them to replace them in my presence.

The fisherman's wife told the butcher's wife, and she told her husband on his return home, they would both be sent to the Tower for ever—he for saying “Poof, poof!” to a prince, she for abusing him soundly to his face. The end of it was that he disposed of his business and left the neighbourhood. It cost me some trouble to convince people that some fancied resemblance to the Prince borne by a retired agriculturist had caused a ludicrous mistake. A paragraph in the papers seemed to disperse the illusion, but what convinced the people the most was the fact that John Biggs went about doing good to the poor and needy, which the Prince never did, as was well known, and, they added, never would.

“I had to bind my friend the fisherman and his too grateful wife to secrecy, and to contradiction of the rumour, instructing them both to say, when questioned, “The people will talk nonsense,” or something to the same effect, and I think, at least I hope, it was successful. The mantle of goodness would not hang gracefully upon my shoulders. It would never be thought I gained it honestly. At last the butcher was found, and I went to fetch him back. They told me, he and his wife, crying all the way at what they called my goodness.”

Now I fancy the small fund which I left with a medical man to supply any deficiencies in the poor man's earnings—for fishing

is at best but a precarious occupation, and boats and nets are liable to get injured—must be exhausted, and I want to make an addition to it. The works of a goodly tendency that I have done are so few that I can't afford to leave one unfinished; and there are a few others living at no great distance from him who may wish John Biggs would give them a call soon. They will be glad to see the old topboots again. The last time I was here I heard a boy about eight years old cry out to his maternal progenitor, "Mother, mother, here's the old topboots a-coming. I am so glad—ain't you?" They all seem to think of the boots more than of the wearer. I believe they would miss any one crack in them, if it could be removed. It amuses me to see their eyes cast down to them when I am speaking. They seem to fancy the voice comes from the boots, and to reply to the boots, not to me.'

'They esteem them for your sake,' observed Arthur.

'I think they must have some distinct regard for them. That fever made me acquainted with more than the fisherman and his family. As I walked away from the door of one cottage the woman exclaimed to her next-door neighbour, "God bless them boots! it's a pity they should ever be wore out. Every time they walks they does good. I don't believe he that's in 'em ever spends a penny on hisself. But if he don't spend some on *them* they'll tumble *all* to pieces, as sure as he's in 'em." It is odd, you will say, but I prize these boots more than all my wardrobe. Every time I wear them they give me happiness.'

'Your pursuits in them give the happiness.'

'Well, it is something; but they are the means to the end, I fancy.'

They reached the fisherman's hut, which a gale had almost rendered roofless. The occupant had been obliged to patch it over with tarpauling, secured by ropes. The chimney—a poor imitation of one—had fallen, but luckily not upon the roof. It had toppled over the end of the building, thus saving the children from being crushed. 'Misfortunes,' it has been said, 'come not in single spies, but in battalions.' The same gale that had damaged the roof and demolished the chimney had wrecked the fishing-boat, which lay in pieces upon the shore—a total loss.

It was clear the house could no longer be considered habitable. The family were in despair. Their means of support were cut off, and the fund left for their aid by Mr. John Biggs was exhausted. The last small sum handed to them was just expended. They knew not whither to look for another day's food, and were bemoaning their hard fate, which seemed to them to be utterly hopeless. But the darkest hour is always the one preceding the dawn; and just as the fisherman and his wife had concluded there was no remedy for the existing state of affairs, the cheery face of Mr.

John Biggs put in an appearance, and changed the aspect of all things by its radiance.

'Thank God!' exclaimed the poor woman involuntarily. The words were echoed by the despairing husband with the addition of another. 'Thank God, *indeed!*' he said, and burst into tears, which his wife was already shedding copiously.

Mr. Biggs looked around, and soon comprehended the cause of their emotion; but he knew not of the disaster to the boat. That was told; his reply was, 'Well, there are more wrecks than that at sea. The boat was old—old enough. It was as well wrecked as not, and better wrecked ashore than afloat; for you would have been in it then—now you are safe. You see you have cause to be thankful instead of mourning. Grieve no more. Here is money to enable you to live while another boat is built; and that shall be done as soon as it may be. You shall have a new one, and of the best. That will do—I am not fond of being thanked, at least in words. One deed, however slight, is preferable to a myriad of words. To show true thankfulness for the past and the present, you must look forward with hope for the future. The same Providence that *has* provided *will* provide, if we deserve its care. Have you any notion who has built, or who is going to occupy, the tight little cot that is built upon the next cliff to this? It seems a snug little place, just fit for a family, and I see there is an abundance of garden ground, a pigstye as snug as the house, and something else—what is it? A cow-shed, perhaps. Can you tell me?'

'I think, sir, it is for a cow. The whole place seems like a little heaven upon earth. But we have never heard who it is for, nor who has built it. Fires have been made in every room to dry the walls well for some time. I daresay the people mean to go into it soon. It must be quite ready. The men at work there all said they did not know who their master was building it for. He was very close about it, they told us. That was all they would say.'

'And enough too. It is never wise to attend to the business of other people—you are so apt to neglect your own while you are doing it. Now listen. *There* is a new house, and *here* is a very old one that never was built. It was only thrown together and piled up. Now it is falling down about your heads. Take my advice—get out of this into that as soon as you can. There must be some person there to look after the two pigs and the cow that will be there to-morrow morning. See that it is properly done. John Biggs is your landlord. The rent is one shilling a year. You will have to pay to his attorney, Mr. Allen of Brighton, the sum of sixpence every six months. Pay it regularly, and take a receipt for it. Then nobody can molest you in your tenancy. Your house will be your castle. If you can't defend it, John Biggs will defend it for you.'

'God bless you, sir!'

'That is enough. He will bless me if I see you doing your best to be happy in the house He has provided for you, and to bring up your children well, and in the fear of Him, in it also. Say no more; but never again be despondent. Less than an hour since you thought you were without a hope in this world. Now what do you think of your position?'

'We do not deserve His goodness to us.'

'None of us do.'

'Nor yours, sir.'

'It is not mine—it is all His. I could not do it had He not permitted me. Thank Him; I am thanked in your doing so. Any additions to the furniture you have that are reasonably required will be made. And now be happy, or I shall be grieved. You would not wish to grieve me, I am sure. When is that youngest child to be christened?'

'Very soon *now*, sir. Only for the trouble that came upon us it would be next Sunday—in a fortnight. There was one thing we wanted to ask you, sir.'

'What is that?'

'To please to give the poor child a name. Your bounty, sir, saved its life; we should like to call it by a name you would give.'

'Let its Christian names be "John Biggs." Will that do?'

'O, yes, sir—that is all we want.'

'Would that the wants of all were so easily satisfied—my own included! I must now go to see others who will be wanting me, and perhaps desponding as you were. Get into the new house instantly.'

'We'll sleep there this night, sir. There is plenty of coals left. I made the fires every morning after the men left. I was wondering nobody came for the key.'

'You did not think you were making your own fire, eh?'

'No, indeed, sir; how could I? 'Twould have been presumptuous for me to think *that*, but I don't deny I wished for such a house—I did, and I prayed such a one might be ours some day.'

'Your prayer was heard—now good-day. At Lewes I will see about the boat. Look out for us as we return. You shall know the result.'

As Mr. Biggs and his companion progressed many expectants were anxiously gazing at the cart, and when one of the brown-topped boots was elevated upon the front of the vehicle, there was a subdued cry of joy—they knew relief was at hand. Arrived at the outskirt of Lewes, they saw at the turnpike a crowd assembled, which impeded their progress, and obliged them to pull up. Mr. Biggs inquired of the gatekeeper what was the cause of the assemblage. The force of habit is very strong; the tollman had, although plunged deeply into grief and well-nigh distracted, gone out with

one hand extended to receive the toll, and the other in a pocket in his white apron to fumble out a ticket, as if nothing had occurred to disturb his mind; but tears were streaming down his cheeks, and his looks were frenzied.

The old man's gray hairs streamed in the wind—his eyes rolled wildly; but he could not answer the question; all he could say was, 'O Mr. Biggs! O sir! my poor girl, poor Mary!' Then he sank to the road in an epileptic attack, the white foam issuing from his lips, and the bursting of the air-bubbles with his stertorous breathing being the only sounds that came from them. Some of the bystanders gently raised him and bore him inside the toll-house, where all seemed confusion. One man went to the side of the cart to enlighten Mr. Biggs as well as he could; but, either from excitement or nervous embarrassment, his statement was incoherent and interrupted—requiring to be patched here and there by some of the persons present, who were perhaps better acquainted with the facts, or less overpowered by Mr. Biggs' presence, which, even in the garb he wore, was more commanding than ordinary.

The combined statements amounted to this: The toll-taker had a daughter whose rustic attractions were the theme of warm admiration in that locality. She was the youngest of a large family—it was said that she was the seventeenth child, and the only one unmarried. Being the youngest, she had ever been the pet of the whole family, and as much indulged as any child of a man in the position of her father could have been. Both her parents were universally respected for their generally good conduct and their kind and neighbourly qualities.

A farmer in the parish, for whom and for whose father the toll-man had long worked, still employed him in a light way—to superintend the management of the horses and stock generally. The old man was past active work, but his system of management was so good, that his employer considered himself benefited by the arrangement, and frequently assured him that he should be retained while he had sufficient life in him to be wheeled about in an invalid chair, 'to give an eye to things.' He had been put into the turnpike house in order to increase his comforts as age crept upon him and his wife, and because his and her probity was so well known, the duties of taking money and giving tickets devolving chiefly upon her.

Another farmer, also in the same parish, had a son rather more than a year older than the gatekeeper's daughter; they had been children together—according to the mixed mode of rustic education they had been schoolmates—the intimacy of childhood and youth was continued as they approached maturity, and, as all believed, it increased. The gatekeeper, considering that the farmer might look higher for a wife for his son, endeavoured to check this intimacy. The young man refused to listen to his remonstrances, and his next

step was to send his wife to the young man's mother, in order to make her acquainted with the existing state of affairs, that she and her husband might exert their influence. The gatekeeper would have no clandestine proceedings. 'Tell them all the truth,' he said, 'and that I won't encourage any acquaintance unknown to them. When they know all they can do as they please.'

It was done accordingly; for the gateman's wife was as rigidly correct as himself—with her consent her 'daughter should never enter a family that would look down upon her.' When the whole facts were laid before the young man's parents, they did not seem much surprised. The farmer was at home when the tollman's wife called. The young man's mother laughed, and said: 'Well, it's a comfort you've nothing worse to tell us. I like Mary, I think, as well as I should have liked a daughter of my own. She has always been a good girl, and I'm sure will make a good wife. Robert might do a deal worse than marrying her, I can tell you, if you don't know it. What is money? You say she'll have none; we knew that as well as you did. But what of it? I had none; my old man hadn't much—not half or quarter as much as Robert will have from his father; and we married, and, thank God, we did well: we worked hard, and the money we hadn't we earned. Let Robert marry Mary as soon as they both like—he'll have my consent—and I only hope it won't be long first. Another thing I've got to say. I've seen what's going on; you've told me no news. I've said nothing, but I've hoped for the best; and I've got a stocking—there's something in the foot of it for Mary; yes, there is, whether she marries Robert or not. 'Twon't be her fault, I know; and if he throws her over, I shall never forgive him, though he is my own son and my only child. I never had a girl, and I feel like a mother to Mary. Them's my sentiments. Let the old man speak for himself.'

The 'old man' did speak for himself. He was not a man to make long speeches—if he had moved an address in the House of Commons, he would not have been two minutes about it. He threw himself back at his ease in his arm-chair, stretched out his legs towards the fender, threw one leg across the other, clasped his hands in front of his calf-skin vest, and crossed his thumbs, saying, 'I says the same as the old woman says—allays did agree—sha'n't fall out now. Sooner he'd have Mary as she is without a penny than any girl I ever see. God bless her! say I.'

Thus things were settled as far as anxious parents could arrange them; but, O, the perversity of human nature! All was to be perverted by an unprincipled man, whose variable passions were his only guides. It was the old, old story of unfaithfulness; but another proof added to the pile that man is 'to one thing constant never.' Mary Archer was one of those clinging and adhesive natures that

ving once love for ever—who never swerve in loyalty, with whom oaths are superfluous, to whom duty is delight, and constancy a religion. Her faith once pledged, no temptation could lead her to break it. Affection once kindled, she loved to live and lived to love; while life lasted love must endure. In him, the trusted one, love was a fleeting desire. She loved to the end, and the end was bitter.

More by actual force than persuasion she had allowed this fickle lover to subdue her virtue—she had sullied her name, and when she urged, pleadingly upon her knees, for reparation, she knelt in vain. The knee she clung to in her agony of grief and shame was brutally driven against her mouth, her appeals drowned in the blood that streamed from her lips. Unhappily she was in no condition to endure this brutality. She was borne up-stairs, where she was then lying, scarcely alive, while her brutal assailant had withdrawn to a public-house to revel and to boast that he could have a girl with money, and where he was still boasting.

Mr. Biggs heard all this with indignation. He turned to Arthur Vere and said, 'I think something should be done in this case; can you tell me what it is best to do, under all the circumstances?'

'He is in a public-house drinking and boasting of his dastardly misdeeds; drag him out by the throat—let him *feel* that such brutality is not to be exercised in England while Englishmen are near. Thrash him to within the last inch of his cowardly life, and drag him to the feet of the poor girl he has outraged—there to kneel for pardon, there to bind himself to make reparation.'

'Good—capital! We'll put the horse up, and it shall be done. I did not take lessons of Jem Belcher, Gully, Jackson, and company for nothing. Rather out of practice—not that my hands forget their cunning. Here goes. What public-house is he in?' asked Mr. Biggs of those around. He was told. 'Thanks,' he said. 'I will ask him what he means by acting as he has acted. Is there a stable to that house?' He was told there was. 'That will do well,' said he; 'it will save time.' They drove away; Mr. Biggs giving ample directions for obtaining medical aid, the fisherman's purse, and all things needful—all to be charged to John Biggs.

A more effective punishment than that inflicted upon the dastardly fellow who had so outraged the toll-taker's daughter was never administered in the prize-ring or out of it. Few words were said—just sufficient to enable him to understand the enormity of his offence, and the light in which it was viewed by right-thinking men, and that the punishment was given in consequence of it—and then the muscular portion of the performance was commenced, and continued till it was thought enough had been bestowed. The recipient was of that opinion long before the giver; the first blow was enough for him. He had been dragged out to the street, and well shaken before any of his chastisement was taken; then one hand held him

in a vice-like grip, while the other was incessantly beating and thud-thud upon the head that vainly tried to dodge this way that—all ways, indeed—but could not evade the well-meant that avenged the poor girl's contusions. 'Blest, Mr. Biggs, if I left a tooth in 'is 'ead,' was the comment of a looker-on. 'I jist come to see fair play, an' I never see sich fair play in my life never. I've looked half way down his throat, an' can't see a thing in front; if he's got any, they're out o' sight, an' he'd better 'em there. An' he sich a big fellow—young, fresh, an' as big as a bull too. One would a thought he'd kill Mr. Biggs, though he ain't a little un. But there, it's the art; if that ain't good, strength no use, nor science neither. I allays said so, an' allays will—now!'

When Mr. Biggs had amused himself as long as he pleased, he dragged the fellow to the toll-house, and there made him kneel and ask pardon; he was not allowed to see his victim in her critical position, but he earnestly, and abjectly indeed, sued for her forgiveness on behalf of her parents, and offered, if Mr. Biggs would only let go the collar, to bind himself to marry her or to do anything else. 'It is a question for the family to decide,' said Mr. Biggs. The medical attendant, who had recovered from his fit, but still seemed influenced by coma, was fully aroused by the medical gentleman, and managed to understand the then state of things. He rubbed his no doubt aching brow, and turned to Mr. Biggs, saying:

'Please, sir, tell me what to do; I want to do right, and it is right to be done to my child; but I'm—I can't understand this. I ought to—advise me, please, sir.'

'It is a matter for your own consideration, and that of the mother and the poor girl herself,' said Mr. Biggs, wishing for water to remove the red stains from his hands, at the same time. 'After what has occurred this day, can the poor sufferer be entrusted to the hands of such a creature? I have no faith in his promises; I think it likely he will break them, that in fact they are only given to escape farther punishment; but were they to be relied upon, the young lady were a daughter of mine, I should not trust him. Notwithstanding what has happened, she is far too good for such a person—devoid as he is of any good and manly feeling and principle. Should the child and its mother both live, the shame of the one and the illegitimacy of the other cannot be hidden—we both know you know both; nothing that he has offered to do or that I can do will remedy either. Have you any idea of your daughter's feelings towards him now—after this outrage upon her, I mean?'

'No, sir; and this gentleman' (the medical attendant) 'must not be agitated at present.'

'Of course not,' said Mr. Biggs. 'Let the matter remain for future consideration.'

These words were scarcely uttered, when the parents of the bastard, to whom intelligence of his brutal conduct had been conveyed by some witnesses of it, arrived to express their sorrow for it; and, seeing his son, the enraged father, notwithstanding the marks of punishment he bore, struck him to the ground, and kicked him out of the toll-house, telling him never to enter his house or presence again. The indignant mother joined in the command, and the degraded creature slunk away amidst the hootings and execrations of all around, which soon assumed the form of peltings. So great was the indignation at his conduct to Mary Archer, who was much esteemed by all, that he could not obtain a shelter in Lewes that night, and had to proceed to some distance from the town to get one, which he found in the cottage of a man who had formerly worked upon his father's farm, and probably had a fellow-feeling for him in his then position, as he was a very notorious 'wife-beater.'

After Mary Archer had somewhat recovered from her illness, and from the shock caused by the death of her child, which only survived three days, it was calmly laid before her whether she would place herself and her happiness in the keeping of a person who had acted as the unworthy gainer of her first affections had done; and after due deliberation she said, that although she had loved him deeply, and could not even then banish him entirely from her heart, she would rather decline a marriage with him, because she felt she must lead a godless life if she were united to him; he had formed connections and habits that were both profligate; and though she had been his victim once, she would not be again. He had, before Mary's determination was made known, endeavoured to carry out a marriage with another, but was ignominiously driven from her house by her father and brothers. Then turning to Mary, and finding himself rejected by her, he enlisted as a soldier. His fate is unknown.

Mr. Biggs, after the fatigues of the day, was rather glad to resume his seat in the cart to proceed back to Brighton, Arthur driving, and both enjoying some fine cigars as they jogged along pleasantly. Cigars are not incentives to conversation; they are rather promoters of thought and reflection. It was not until each had smoked a couple that Mr. Biggs made an offer to converse beyond a question, or even a monosyllabic reply to one, 'Because,' he said, 'if you talk, your cigar is apt to go out; and when it is relighted the flavour is spoiled; no matter how good, how fine its flavour and odour, a cigar that has been permitted to go out is not fit for smoking afterwards. You must throw it away in self-defence. I do not smoke largely, but I have epicureanic notions of smoking, of which I cannot divest myself. Have you ever remarked the difference of flavour and odour of a cigar after it has gone out and been relighted?'

'I have, and made a note of it. I have ever since been careful

not to allow a cigar to be extinguished ; but at sea such catastrophes will happen, so I shy the stump over the bulwarks to the sharks. I don't know whether they are aware of the difference or not ; in other matters they are not too delicate.'

'They would not be likely to seize, or even to see, so small an object as a portion of a cigar, I should say,' said Mr. Biggs.

'Nothing escapes the eye of a shark ; and what his eye perceives, his mouth is by wonderful accuracy turned up to receive when it reaches the water. If a shark played at cricket, he would catch all his opponents out. You may drop shirt-buttons over the taffrail when a shark is following a ship, and not one of them, if dropped singly, and at reasonable intervals, will be missed. Anything descending is caught ; what approaches them horizontally is missed often.'

'Strange,' said Mr. Biggs. 'Like our lawyers, they do not seem to perceive what is before their eyes ; an object must fall upon their heads to be apprehended. I have long been endeavouring to make lawyers, law-makers, and statesmen see that our Sundays are made days of greater temptation to intemperance for the people generally by our own omissions. We do not provide any rational and sober recreations for the people on the Sunday, and yet we wonder why and how it is that they drink, and seek in public-houses that which is not to be found elsewhere, namely, some kind of amusement to while away the tedium of the day.'

'Sundays are always dull in England,' said Arthur. 'People are glad to go anywhere and to do anything to get it over.'

'Precisely so. Why should it be ? Why should a Sunday be a day of greater temptation to excess than other days ? I answer, because it is more unentertaining. The minds of men must be amused ; they require to be gently stimulated by rational means, or the men will fly to stimulants that are not gentle or wholesome, but hurtful both to mind and body, heart and soul. We close the doors of all our museums ; even the British Museum, which gives instruction and reasonable entertainment, is hermetically sealed on the day of rest to those who could only on that day find time to examine its treasures without loss of income. Is this right or wise ?'

'I am young, and have not cut my wisdom teeth yet ; but it appears to me to be wrong, unwise, and injurious.'

'I think so too. The plea is, that to open the British Museum would be irreligious, and destroy the holiness of the Sabbath ; so we close that very excellent institution, and allow public-houses to be partially open by way of compensation. Our legislators cannot or will not see that, if museums were opened, public-houses would not have so many visitants. People often go into taverns only because they have no other place to go to, not because they want drink ; often without a desire for, and would rather be without, it.

I know this ; for I, John Biggs, have taken the pains to make call visits to public-houses, in order to learn the truth. These top-boots have been under the tables of drinking-houses only to learn if it be a fact that people go there for the love of drinking ; and John Biggs has found it was not so.'

'Has no other character been assumed ?' asked John Biggs the younger.

'Yes ; "John Biggs" has given place to "Richard Smith," in sober and seedy black, surmounting clean linen, inducing the belief that Smith had seen better days in some ; in others that he was a broken-down lawyer, "struck off the rolls," or an attorney's managing clerk at a low salary, which did not allow him to imbibe and to wear a new suit. Smith has also been taken for a bankrupt merchant, "playing at hide-and-seek" to avoid arrest ; and so on. The black threadbare suit seems more fit for town wear. Smith has heard men say, "I am now spending money because I am weary, and there is no place to go to for recreation ;" or "There is another sixpence gone from me and my heirs for ever and ever, and another nail in my coffin ; not that I want drink, but one must spend something for the sake of a rest, or to pass away an hour or two, and men can't keep houses open for nothing."'

'Have you ever told this to your law-making friends ?'

'Smith has told them so often, and many other things besides ; but the reply was ever the same : "We must keep the Sabbath-day holy. The French have all sorts of amusements on Sundays, and see what a revolution they got up. We must have no revolutions here. Once destroy the sanctity of the Sabbath, and Republicanism will spring up rampant at once."'

'You might as well expect an earthquake from the same cause,' quoth John Biggs junior.

'Just as reasonably. As if plain sensible Englishmen could be driven to revolution by opening a museum for their edification and their amusement—the very thing that would divert their thoughts from all that savoured of anarchy. I have been told by grave politicians that my ideas are republican and revolutionary, and subversive of all religion, if carried out. I do not see that ; but I cannot remedy what I believe to be a great evil, and it grieves me that I cannot.'

'Pity there is not a despotism to meet such cases,' said the impulsive son of John Biggs, knocking off the ashes of his cigar. 'In this matter, for example, a despotic rule would be infinitely better than a mixture of the forms of government. The mixture requires so much shaking up ; all the best part of it lies at the bottom ; the weakest is above it, and the weaker parts of the remedies are floated, while the best and strongest are left upon the strand. Then there is the loss of time spent in inaction, talking nonsense,

and amplifying the little that may be good, till journals are overladen; and the only result is, that the names of the utterers are "kept before the public" to feed vanity. Long speeches are made when the heads from which they come should be comfortably night-capped, and their only sounds should be snores. Englishmen try hard to persuade themselves that their own form of government is best; but their very boastings that it is so prove their own doubts of the fact. As "good wine needs no bush," so good government needs no trumpet.'

Mr. Biggs laughed and replied: 'In some cases a despotism, mildly and wisely exercised, would be convenient and expedient, doubtless. "Many men" must have "many minds," as the old proverb asserts they have. It is difficult to bring many minds to view any subject in the one true light; more difficult to induce them to act promptly and wisely. What seems right and wise to A. is stark madness in the estimation of B. Hence procrastination; session after session is frittered away; nothing is done; practical good is lost in senseless debate.'

'A wise despot, who had the real welfare of his people at heart, would test the good or evil of a measure by a fair trial, ordered in a few words, written or spoken in a moment. If bad, it could be changed as speedily; if really good, it would stand, and the people would benefit. One great evil of which the people complain, not unjustly, would at least be prevented.'

'What are you referring to?' asked Mr. Biggs.

'Parliamentary jobbery,' replied his son. 'This nation seems to me to be like a ship at sea, in which all the crew are captains; one is called the chief of all, but in reality is the least. There are no such ships luckily; but just fancy, if there could be one, what a hell afloat it would be! Fancy what the premium for insurance would be, and ask yourself where you could find underwriters! To look for them would be like searching for a needle in a shipload of loose wool, save at St. Luke's or New Bedlam. The owner would have to bear his own loss, to insure himself; and the first issue of the *Naval Register* would record a wreck upon the rocks of confusion. The captain—he that was called the chief or head of all—would be said to have done no wrong; but everybody would swear he did nothing right, as is the case with other "heads."'

'Crowned heads, of course, you are hitting at,' said Mr. Biggs, smiling.

'Let the "crowned heads" "wear the cap, if it fit them,"' said John Biggs junior; 'it will fit some, no doubt, and you cannot wonder at it. Many a head has had a crown thrust upon it that was not worth half a crown, and would have been dear at the odd sixpence.'

'Hit away. You, at least, will not *strain* the quality of mercy.'

You throw dregs and all at the objects of your censure ; but there is something worse even than that : most of them deserve it. May I ask your notion, if you entertain one, or have troubled yourself to form one, of me as a king, supposing it should prove my destiny to become one ? It is not at all a point of ambition with me. Whatever may be thought to the contrary, there is not a man in the United Kingdom to whom such an elevation can be more indifferent. In my view, it would be but an accession of cares and anxieties, with more griefs caused by a knowledge of evils that I could not prevent, and distresses that I could not alleviate. The head that thinks must lie uneasily when it wears a crown ; the heart that feels must be a bed of thorns ; the hand that would give, but is restrained by means—for even a king's purse is limited in its lining—as well as by forms and precedents, as by men who are assumed by the world and by themselves to have grown gray in the service of their country, and in the acquirement of wisdom in that service—forms, precedents, and men being alike *unwise*—that hand is fettered by gyves more painful to bear than the chains of Newgate. I have always thought of the time that would bring the increase of a crown to my means with apprehension and pain. I would infinitely prefer to precede my father to the tomb. You may believe this ; others would not. Were I to say to others what I say to you, my reputation for hypocrisy would be increased ; that would be the only but inevitable result. You may have noticed that I invariably cut all discussion of any topics that refer to that event very short—abruptly, indeed. I wish all to know that any allusion to the end of my father's reign is distasteful and displeasing to me. Of my own intentions, objects, desires, and aims in the future which I pray may never come, I never speak ; in truth, I cannot bear to think of them, or of aught that can be connected with a change that I cannot anticipate but with aversion and, though I would avoid strong language in reference to so solemn a subject, with horror. The most severe illness I have known was the result of a dream in which I saw the forms of a coronation completed. Let the time come when it may, I shall never give one direction which regards that ceremony. All will be left to others, with a simple request that the interests of trade may be considered. Whatever be the omissions and deficiencies, or excesses and extravagances, they will be the work of others, not mine. To my organisation, there is something excessively revolting in giving orders for an increase of pomp and gorgeous splendour so immediately after the death of a parent ; additionally so when the great goodness of that parent is considered. Indeed, there should be no public exhibition whatever, were not the paramount subject of the interests of trade ever before me. To those interests I must sacrifice feeling ; and if that sacrifice of feeling alone be not sufficient to make a son of average filial love, esteem,

respect, and sense of duty regard the event with aversion and horror, it is difficult, to me, to conceive what can be. But my thoughts have absorbed my attention. I must return to the question I propounded. I am rather anxious to know what sort of a king you think I should make.'

'Well, as kings go, I fancy you would be a tolerably fair sample of the bulk. There might be worse, if we knew where to find them.'

Mr. Biggs burst into a vehement fit of laughter, which threatened to burst him, or his ample coat and vestments beneath it. His face grew red and apoplectic; the veins upon his forehead and temples seemed also on the point of bursting. It was long before he could restrain himself; probably exhaustion accelerated the cessation. The first words he uttered were:

'O Arthur, Arthur—I beg pardon, I forget myself and your *nom de voyage*—I should say, O John, what a sample of a courtier you are! Is this your way of worshipping the rising sun? You too, who have known Parsees, and have seen their matin genuflexions and general performances. What could you expect in court, after such a reply, but perpetual banishment? Some men, in ancient and modern times, have gone to court to seek their fortunes, and have made them. The fortune you would make, under the most forbearing and generous prince, would not pay for your outfit. Never seek to make your way in life by going to court. Why, if I had asked the same question of any one of the friends left in the Pavilion, I should have had a catalogue of virtues as long as that of a month's sale by auction, every one of which I should have been solemnly assured was my own by birthright; and each and all would be exercised for the benefit of the people, who would be the happiest, the best, and the most flourishing people ever upon earth, or that ever will be. You have not given me *one*.'

'Not I. When you show one, I will give you credit for it.'

Mr. Biggs laughed again, saying, when he had concluded:

'You are determined not to be cheated out of praise that may not be merited. I was not wholly unprepared for your honesty, but I hardly expected such a downright expression of it. Still I like it the better—*all* the better. I have dined, supped, and supped full of flattery, ever since I was able to understand the meaning of words. I never was told the plain unsophisticated truth before. The novelty of hearing it is worth the journey taken to-day, were it ten thousand times longer. A voyage round the world would be well recompensed by the discovery of one who could and would speak the truth honestly, openly, and fearlessly to one's face. Upon my honour, I believe you are the only one who would do as you have done. You are a gem, and I prize you. I entreat, as a favour unspeakably great, that whenever I am about to do a thing not *comme il faut*,

you will place it before me in the light in which you see it. Never heed who is present; speak as you have hitherto spoken; tell the truth, and shame—'

'The devil,' said John Biggs junior. 'I know what you mean.'

'Just so. Will you?'

'Won't I? I should like to see the man that would or could stop me.'

'What I fear most is, that consideration for *me* may induce you to stay yourself. I wish you to act towards me as you would to one of your messmates at sea.'

'Do not fear; I will serve you worse than I would a messmate, because you ought to know better than my messmates would. The boatswain that can pipe and won't pipe should be made to pipe. If you disobey orders, I'll stop your grog for a month.'

'Capital! Does grog include Burgundy?'

'Everything save water—that you take *ad libitum*—cold without.'

'Severe, but wholesome, nevertheless. I will be obedient, and avoid the punishment. As to law-making, I never have had, never shall have, the chance of making one without the interference of both Houses. "A plague upon both your Houses!" I say, with sincerity. I really think I could frame some laws that would make the people happier, better, and more contented; while I would certainly relieve them of some of the taxation which most oppresses them. My opinion has ever been that "those who have most money should pay most taxes;" that, you will be told, is "George's Golden Rule"—so called by my familiars. But there again I am told I am too democratic. The fact is, I am in bad odour with both parties—aristocrats and democrats. The people believe I have no thought or for them; they set me down as a mere sensualist and a would-be tyrant. Mr. Biggs and Mr. Smith have been told so by many, and at the same time have said that Biggs and Smith entertain notions that are too broad, too levelling, for them—some of the tastes of the people. They would not go so far nor desire such changes. Smith has been told in his seedy black suit, "Why, you are a complete revolutionist—only people who have nothing to lose would talk as you do;" at the same time glancing at his threadbare coat and its grayish seams—though he honestly spoke only such changes as I thought and think should be made for the benefit of the people at large.'

'Now, father, you had better get out and go quietly home by the back way, and mind you do not stop or get into mischief as you go. No grog to-morrow if you do; and I shall be very soon after you to see whether you do or not.'

'That is right, my son; do your duty.'

Mr. Biggs got out of the cart, and the brown-topped boots dragged slowly along while John Biggs junior proceeded to deliver

the horse and cart to the owner. The Prince had just time to change his habiliments, and to meet his guests and their inquiries after his health, before dinner was announced to be served. Arthur de Vere entered as if nothing unusual had occurred, just as Lord Elstree was telling the Prince it was 'the champagne last night that had made him all abroad that day;' adding, 'by the way, you look as if you had this morning taken a good many of the hairs of the dog that bit you last night. It is a bad habit, and must be amended. Morning drinking is always bad—very.'

The effect of the sea-breezes had increased the colour in the Prince's face, and thus induced the suspicion. The Prince said to young De Vere, 'You have been with me all day—have the goodness to state what I have taken since breakfast, and what I took by way of stimulants at breakfast.'

'Nothing whatever. I can attest that upon oath if necessary. The assurance was received, but suspicious glances were exchanged, and in this manner was the Prince often misunderstood by his friends—even the most intimate; for his private excursions were not unfrequent, and both they and their objects were alike *au secret*. The friend who accompanied him, and one attendant, only knew where such journeys were made. He really 'did good by stealth.'

J. H. EYRE.

THE FOOD OF GREAT MEN

BUCKLE has traced the physical, moral, and intellectual degeneration of the Hindoos to the element of starch in rice. If only their ancestors had lived on wheaten bread and good roast beef, instead of rice, the history of the world would have been changed. James Mackintosh used to say he believed the difference between an Italian and another was produced by the quantity of coffee he drank.

Who, then, will deny that it is worth our while to ask what has generally been the food of great men? If, says Mr. Carlyle, we are sincere, may we not all be heroes? If, say we, greatness is the result of good living, may we not all become great? Unfortunately it is extremely difficult to lay down any proposition on this subject with scientific accuracy. Facts there are in abundance, but no attempt as yet at classification. We are in the experimental stage of a new science—for such it may claim to be, in these days when it is sought to refer all spiritual effects to physical causes.

But it is surely interesting to gather a few of these facts, even if we attempt to deduce no theory from them, at least for the present, leaving that task to the philosopher of the future.

'Great men are great eaters' would probably be the first exception of one who was given to over-hasty generalisation. There are indeed many examples to support such a rule. Charles V., for instance, was an enormous eater. We are told that 'he breakfasted at five on a fowl seethed in milk and dressed with sugar and spices. After this he went to sleep again. He dined at twelve, and supped always of twenty dishes. He supped twice; at first soon after five, and the second time at midnight or one o'clock, which was perhaps the most solid of the four. After meat he ate a great quantity of pastry and sweetmeats, and he irrigated every day with very vast draughts of beer and wine. His stomach, originally a very powerful one, succumbed after forty years of such labours' (*Motley's History of the Dutch Republic*).

After all, Charles died at an age—about fifty-eight—at which we are accustomed in these days to consider a statesman as still in the prime of life. The love of pastry appears to have been hereditary in the House of Hapsburg. Philip II., the same historian tells us, 'looked habitually on the ground when he conversed, was awkward in speech, embarrassed, and even suffering in manner. This was ascribed partly to habitual pains in the stomach, occa-

sioned by his inordinate fondness for pastry.' Philip ordering an *auto-da-fé* after a meal of gooseberry-tart, which had disagreed with him, is a subject for an historical picture.

Frederick the Great is another illustration of the rule. Though he could dine on a cup of chocolate in war time, he loved good eating and drinking, and undoubtedly hastened his death by refusing to conform in any way to proper rules of diet. 'The king,' wrote Mirabeau, who was in Berlin at the time, 'eats every day of ten or twelve dishes at dinner, each very highly seasoned; besides, at breakfast and supper, bread-and-butter covered with salted tongue and pepper. We are at the last scene.' No wonder. A short time before a gentleman dined with Frederick, when an eel-pie was brought to table which he declared was so hot 'that it looked as if it had been baked in hell.' The king was immoderately fond of these eel-pies, peppered to excess. But about six weeks before his death we have the record of a breakfast such as a sick man has rarely eaten. Our authority is again Mirabeau. 'On the 4th of July, when the doctor,' the celebrated Zimmermann from Hanover, 'saw the king in the afternoon, all had again changed for the worse. He had applied himself to public business from half-past three in the morning till seven. He then ate for his breakfast a plate of sweetmeats, composed of sugar, white of eggs, and sour cream; then strawberries, cherries, and cold meat.' Frederick's illness was dropsy. He died on the 17th of August 1786. Every schoolboy will remember the parallel of the English king who died of eating too many humpreys. King John, too, is said to have died of a surfeit of peaches and new ale. The verdict of modern epicures will probably be, 'Serve him right.'

Most of the English kings, we suspect, were fair trencher-men, as most of them were also men of ability. There is a curious anecdote of Henry VII. bearing on this subject. The king had been out hunting in the neighbourhood of Windsor. His eagerness in the pursuit of the chase had carried him out of sight and hearing of his retinue. Night was falling: return to the castle that day was impossible, for close at hand lay the Abbey of Reading. Thither accordingly the king turned his steps. His habit was simple, and the good monks took him for one of the royal foresters, whilst Henry, for reasons of his own, did not care to undeceive them. He was hospitably entertained, and the lord abbot looked on with an approving smile at the hearty performance of his guest. At last he said, 'Truly I would give his grace your master the half of my revenues for so good an appetite.' Three days passed, the abbot was suddenly arrested in the king's name, and hurried to the Tower, where a diet of bread and water was assigned him. The end of the story may be imagined. Before a month was over the abbot had recovered an excellent appetite for beef and beer. But the tale is

viously apocryphal. Even a Tudor could not have arrested a tired abbot in this summary fashion.

From Henry VIII.'s pictures we may safely infer that his appetite was not bad.

Descending to the Stuarts, we find Henrietta Maria, at her first banquet in England, eating pheasant on a Friday, notwithstanding the signs and even open remonstrances of her French confessor. Poor girl! she was scarcely seventeen, and the sea-passage had probably given her an appetite.

Her estimable son, King Charles II. of glorious memory, delighted in eggs and ambergris, of which we may hope he partook moderately. His death was supposed by some to have been occasioned by poison administered in this his favourite dish.

William III., the saviour of our liberties, both ate and drank more than was good for him. He loved to sit many hours at table: indeed, dinner was his chief recreation. Nothing must interfere with his enjoyment; the Princess Anne might look wistfully at that dish of young peas, but she looked in vain, for the king ate them all, and never even offered her a spoonful. She revenged herself by calling the deliverer 'Caliban.'

Among other sovereigns we find the great Napoleon a voracious eater. Some one has attributed the loss of the battle of Leipzig to the effects of a shoulder of mutton stuffed with onions, with which the emperor literally gorged himself, so as to become incapable of clear-minded and vigorous action. He ate very fast. The state banquets at the Tuileries lasted about thirty-five minutes. On the other hand, he was no lover of wine. In that melancholy voyage to St. Helena, he offended the English officers by rising from table before drinking had fairly begun. 'The general,' one of these prigs had the brutality to say in his hearing, 'has evidently not studied manners in the school of Lord Chesterfield.' Their idea of politeness—certainly not Lord Chesterfield's—was to drink on till you toppled under the table.

Far be it from us to intrude on the private life of the illustrious nephew of Napoleon. But we were amused in reading the memoirs of the late Dr. Véron—a warm panegyrist of the ex-emperor—to see the attempts of that worthy man to affect some knowledge of the secret history of the *coup d'état*. On the morning of the memorable 2d of December 1851, the prince-president, he tells us, rose at five and took a cup of coffee, according to custom. We can find that this is all Dr. Véron knew.

And it is all that our humble chronicle aspires to know.

We take the fact from Dr. Véron. He must have had it of the prince-president's valet.

The founder of the greatness of Russia must unquestionably be added to the list of great men and great eaters. Macaulay tells us

how, when Peter the Great visited England in the year 1698, the immense quantities of meat which he devoured, the pints of brandy which he swallowed, and which, it was said, he had carefully distilled with his own hands, were during some weeks popular topics of conversation. Great as was Peter, he might have found his peer in the Roman Emperor Maximin (A.D. 235-238), who could eat in one day forty pounds of meat and drink six gallons of wine—unless the historians lie.

There can be no doubt, however, that the Roman emperors numbered among them many a notable glutton. Elagabalus loved to sup on the tongues of peacocks and nightingales; he fed his lions on pheasants and parrots. His majesty would also give a zest to the pleasures of the table by assembling companies of guests who were all fat or all lean, or all tall or all short, or all bald or all gouty. Capital fun too—for the emperor. The truth of the story that Nero enriched his soups by dissolving diamonds in them may safely be left to chemists to decide.

Of the first, the true Cæsar, of him who has been called the greatest character in history, it may be sufficient to quote the famous saying of Cato, 'That of all those who had helped to . . . overthrow the republic, Cæsar was the only sober man.' It is not the less true that he loved the pleasures of the table, and was an affable and genial host. As a guest he probably gave the finest example of high breeding that has ever been known. The story is familiar as told by Suetonius. The dictator was dining out. Some rancid oil was served with the salad. Every one else made wry faces. Cæsar appeared not to perceive the mistake and asked for another supply.

Great things, however, have been done by men who ate little or nothing at all. Women have given us noble examples of such self-denial as is not dreamt of in these days. Listen to the story of St. Clara, virgin and abbess (1193-1253), who, 'not content with the four Lents and the other general mortifications of her rule, always wore next her skin a rough shift of horse-hair or of hog's bristles cut short; she fasted church vigils and all Lent on bread and water, and also from the 11th of November to Christmas-day, and during these times on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays ate nothing at all' (Butler's *Lives of the Saints*). This was no idle woman's fancy—no pretence of serving God without doing good to one's fellow-creatures. This excellent lady's life—she was noble by birth—was spent in good deeds. Idleness she could not endure. 'Even when she was sick in bed she spun with her own hands fine linen for corporals, and for the service of the altar, which she distributed through all the churches of Assisium.' Nor did St. Clara by her hard life make a virtue of necessity. 'When a large fortune fell to her, by the death of her father, after her profession,

she gave the whole to the poor, without reserving one single farthing for the monastery.' Indeed, the order she founded, that of 'Poor Clares,' which exists at the present day, was not permitted to hold property. Pope Gregory IX. desired to mitigate this part of her rule, and offered to settle a yearly revenue on her monastery of St. Damian's; but she in the most pressing manner persuaded him by many reasons, in which her love of evangelical poverty made her eloquent, to leave her order in its first rigorous establishment.

Heyne, while editing his *Tibullus* in Dresden in a poor comrade's garret, with the floor for his bed and two folios for pillow, gathered peasecod shells in the streets and boiled them for his dinner.

When the Emperor Julian was first elevated to the rank of *Cæsar*, the young philosopher was quite distressed at the imperial *menu*—so elegant and sumptuous was the bill of fare. Pheasants he positively forbade to be brought to table; and extended the same prohibition to sow's udder (probably boiled in milk), a famous Roman delicacy. Whether this last order was purely a heroic instance of self-denial may be doubted.

Mahomet, though the founder of a sensual religion, which promises a sensual paradise, was himself an abstemious man. 'Disdaining,' says Gibbon, 'the penance and merit of a hermit, he observed, without effort or vanity, the abstemious diet of an Arab and a soldier. On solemn occasions he feasted his companions with rustic and hospitable plenty; but in his domestic life many weeks would elapse without a fire being kindled on the hearth of the prophet. The interdiction of wine was confirmed by his example; his hunger was appeased with a sparing allowance of barley-bread; he delighted in the taste of milk and honey; but his ordinary food consisted of dates and water.'

As we write the gigantic proportions of our task begin to dawn on us. We have scarcely spoken of any but princes: what shall we say of poets and philosophers, of lawyers and divines? The time would fail to tell how Blackstone composed his *Commentaries* over a bottle of port-wine; how Sheridan, after some cutting remarks from Pitt in the House, went to the refreshment-room, called for a bottle of madeira, knocked off the neck, poured the contents into a basin, tossed them off, and, returning, made the finest speech that had ever been heard; how Byron sustained life on biscuits and soda-water; how Beckford composed *Vathek* at one long sitting of some forty hours, during which time he took no nourishment but coffee; how Synesius, the old fifth-century bishop, sat up, according to the late Mr. Kingsley, whole nights, drinking strong liquors and composing hymns. In fact, the question of what we owe to wine and to tea or coffee respectively is of itself serious. Cowper has sung the praises of tea, Delille those of coffee; a thousand bards, from Anacreon to Moore, have celebrated the joys of the wine-cup.

'Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue' professes to be inspired by a bottle of port; it is certainly not the happiest effort of the Laureate's muse, yet such a stanza as this would make the fortune of an ordinary writer :

'Ah yet, though all the world forsake,
Though fortune clip my wings,
I will not cramp my heart, nor take
Half-views of men and things.
Let Whig and Tory stir their blood ;
There must be stormy weather ;
But for some true result of good
All parties work together.'

One couplet in the poem deserves to be immortal :

'that eternal want of pence
Which vexes public men.'

The old proverb said, 'Tell me what you drink, and I will tell you what you are.' Brillat Savarin varied it to 'Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are.' Neither is a good criterion. Temperament, nationality, climate produce a thousand individualities. It is said that an Englishman fights best when full, a Frenchman fasting, and a Dutchman drunk; a Prussian, we might add, with a pipe of 'requisitioned' tobacco in his mouth. Herodotus tells us of a wise custom among the Persians : when a question of State was to be debated they got drunk and gave their opinions under the encouraging influence of the wine; next morning they considered the subject when sober, and then compared their judgments. Herodotus would probably have ascribed the imposition of the match-tax and the withdrawal of the tax to two different cabinet councils—one after dinner and one after breakfast. The same of the prohibition to hold a meeting in Trafalgar-square and the withdrawal of that prohibition.

An extract from Boswell's *Life of Johnson* is not to be resisted in a paper on the 'Food of Great Men.' Some of the sage's remarks, indeed, are so sensible that we may hope they will encourage others seriously to take in hand this great question. 'At supper this night' (it is somewhere in the year 1763) 'he talked of good eating with uncommon satisfaction. "Some people," said he, "have a foolish way of not minding, or pretending not to mind, what they eat. For my part, I mind my belly very studiously and very carefully; for I look upon it that he who does not mind his belly will hardly mind anything else." He now appeared to me *Jean Bull philosophe*, and he was for the moment not only serious but vehement. Yet I have heard him, upon other occasions, talk with great contempt of people who were anxious to gratify their palates; and the 206th number of his *Rambler* is a masterly essay against

osity. His practice indeed, I must acknowledge, may be considered as casting the balance of his different opinions upon this object, for I never knew any man who relished good eating more than he did. When at table he was totally absorbed in the business of the moment; his looks seemed riveted to his plate; nor would he, unless when in very high company, say one word, or even pay the least attention to what was said by others, till he had satisfied his appetite; which was so fierce and indulged with such intemperance that while in the act of eating the veins of his forehead swelled, and generally a strong perspiration was visible. To those whose sensations were delicate this could not but be disgusting; and it was doubtless not very suitable to the character of a philosopher, who should be distinguished by self-command. But it must be owned that Johnson, though he could be rigidly abstemious, was not a temperate man either in eating or drinking. He could refrain, but he could not use moderately. He told me that he had fasted ten days without inconvenience, and that he had never been hungry at once. They who beheld with wonder how much he ate upon all occasions, when his dinner was to his taste, could not easily conceive what he must have meant by hunger; and not only was he remarkable for the extraordinary quantity which he ate, but he was, or affected to be, a man of very nice discernment in the science of cookery. He used to descant critically on the dishes which had been at table where he had dined or supped, and to recollect very minutely what he had liked. I remember when he was in Scotland praising "*Gordon's palates*" (a dish of palates at the Honourable Alexander Gordon's) with a warmth of expression which might have done honour to more important subjects. "As for Maclaurin's imitation of a *made dish*, it was a wretched attempt." He, about the same time, was so much displeased with the performance of a nobleman's French cook that he exclaimed with vehemence, "I'd throw such a rascal into the river;" and he then proceeded to alarm a lady, whose house he was to sup, by the following manifesto of his skill: "I, madam, who live at a variety of good tables, am a much better judge of good cookery than any person who has a very tolerable cook, but lives much at home; for his palate is gradually adapted to the taste of his cook; whereas, madam, in trying by a wider range, I can more exquisitely judge." When invited to dine, even with an intimate friend, he was not pleased if something better than a plain dinner was not prepared for him. I have heard him say on such an occasion, "This was a good dinner enough to be sure; but it was not a dinner to ask a man to." On the other hand, he was wont to express with great glee his satisfaction when he had been entertained quite to his mind. One day, when he had dined with his neighbour and landlord in Bolt-court, Mr. Allen the sinner, whose old housekeeper had studied his taste in everything,

he pronounced this eulogy: "Sir, we could not have had a better dinner had there been a *synod of cooks*."

The nice discernment of Johnson was, however, that of an *eclectic*: at least we believe that epicures do not as a rule relish a leg of pork boiled till it drops from the bone, or a veal-pie with plums and sugar, or the outside cut of a salt buttock of beef. These were Johnson's favourite dainties. In the matter of drink he frankly confessed that his liking was for the strongest, as it was not the flavour but the effect that he desired. He loved to pour capillaire into his port-wine, and melted butter into his chocolate. Voltaire's taste, by the way, was curious in this respect, for he mixed coffee and chocolate together. One remark of Johnson's seems to hit the bull's-eye. 'Wherever,' he said, 'the dinner is ill got up, there is poverty, or there is avarice, or there is stupidity; in short, the family is somehow grossly wrong, for a man seldom thinks with more earnestness of anything than he does of his dinner, and if he cannot get that well dressed he should be suspected of inaccuracy in other things.'

The food of great men is, after all, the food of little men also. Dinner makes the whole world kin. There is a Mexican proverb about the national dish of that country:

'He who lets the puchero pass
Must be either in love, or asleep, or an ass.'

We should say very much the same of a man who affects not to care for a good dinner. He must be either a hypocrite or a fool. Let him learn a sunnier wisdom from old Froissart, with whose bright and joyous lines we would fain conclude this rambling paper:

'Au boire je prens grant plaisir :
Aussi fai-je eu beaus draps vestir,
En viande fresche et nouvelle,
Quant à table me voy servir,
Mon esperit se renouvelle.
Violettes en leurs saisons,
Et roses blanches et vermeilles
Voy volontiers ; car c'est raisons ;
Et chambres pleines de candeilles
Jeux et dances et longues veilles,
Et beaus lits pour li rafreschir,
Et, au couchier, pour mieulx dormir,
Epices, claiet et rocelle,
En toutes ces choses véir
Mon esperit se renouvelle.'

W. G. MURRAY.

HUGH MELTON

A Story

BY KATHARINE KING, AUTHOR OF 'OUR DETACHMENT,' 'THE QUEEN OF THE REGIMENT,' ETC.

CHAPTER IV. THE CROQUET PARTY.

It was during that short golden summer we generally have in the beginning of October—when the leaves don their gayest colours, crimson and bronze, scarlet and glowing yellow, when the hills are hazy in the distance, and a bluish vapour hangs over moor and upland—that Hugh, I, and several of the others, Cameron among the number, were invited to the last croquet party of the season at Lady A.'s charming place, six miles out of Aldershot on the London road.

We were asked at three o'clock, to play croquet until five-o'clock tea, after which those who liked might play again, or stroll in the grounds until six o'clock, when we were to dine, and end the evening by dancing. Hugh was not able to go early with me, but he promised to follow in time for the dance; so Cameron, I, and one or two others went before, to assist at the croquet and get as much in out of the day as circumstances permitted, it being generally understood amongst us that before long we should be ordered out to India, and have to bid a long farewell to the pleasures and pastimes of 'merrie England.'

The croquet went off in much the usual way; a great amount of irritation, leavened by the smallest possible modicum of croquet. By the way, if there is anything I detest, it is that habit of pretending to do one thing, whilst all the time you are doing another, and would not for the world give an iota of attention to the object on which you are supposed to be engaged.

Why not call an entertainment like the one in question a flirtation party? It would be a great deal more true than its present name, and would at least afford people the satisfaction of knowing what they were going for. Now if a real lover of croquet goes for croquet's sake, he finds nothing is farther from the thoughts of most of the company than attending to their game; and if he goes for the other thing, it is an awful bore to be interrupted in the midst of his most flattering speech by, 'It's the red ball to play now,' or, 'Come now, C——, it's your turn.'

At five o'clock we went in to tea, in the little room that overlooks the croquet ground, and which you enter thence by the

window. The evening was lovely; the air balmy as in June; the blue shadows settling down so peacefully on the surrounding landscape, the purple and gold clouds of sunset casting their burnished light on wood and hill in such changeful and gorgeous beauty, that I could not tear myself from the scene, and remained outside leaning against the open window listening to the *bavardage* inside, and feasting my eyes in a kind of delicious lazy dream. I was standing sideways, so that I could, by a very slight movement of the head, either see into the room or gaze at will over the wide expanse of country spread out before me. Suddenly I heard a voice I knew and disliked (it belonged to a young lady of the neighbourhood, fast and a good croquet player, with whom it was rumoured Solace was desperately smitten) exclaim:

'Isn't there a Captain Melton in your regiment, Captain Cameron? The man there are all those curious stories about, I mean.'

'There is a Captain Melton,' he answered; 'but to what stories do you refer, Miss Bruce?'

'O, you know very well,' she replied, 'though I suppose you who are in the same regiment don't like repeating them. I mean those stories about some money he took, or at least is strongly suspected of having taken, out of Captain James's room. They say the money has been returned since, and I daresay that is true; for when he found himself suspected, he was no doubt afraid to keep it.'

I remained stupefied, unable to utter a word for a minute, so great was my astonishment, first at such a rumour being for a minute believed and repeated, and secondly, at its having attained such notoriety. Before, however, Cameron could answer, or I could interpose, a clear musical voice from the other end of the room said distinctly:

'It is false, the vilest fabrication ever invented by slanderous tongues. None but those who envy Captain Melton his good reputation would have dared to coin so base a calumny.'

I turned whence the voice proceeded, and there, with her head erect, her dark eyes flashing, and her whole face flushed with generous and indignant feeling, sat Miss Meares. I had not observed her on the croquet ground, and yet she must have been out, as a lace shawl was thrown across her shoulders, and a dainty hat, that seemed composed almost entirely of white curling feathers, lay beside her on the sofa.

Cameron's face was not pleasant to look at as he glanced at his betrothed; but before he could speak, Miss Bruce said, with the nearest approach to a sneer she could venture on when addressing a lady of so much importance as Miss Meares:

'Dear me, how very fortunate Captain Melton is in having such an advocate! But those things are said of him, nevertheless.'

'Miss Meares is right,' interrupted Cameron; 'Hugh Melton is

a very good sort of fellow, and I am sure he has done nothing wrong, though it is true those curious stories are afloat. I wonder greatly what gave rise to them; it must have been some trilling indiscretion on his part.'

'Pardon me,' said I, here stepping into the room (he hadn't noticed me before, as his back was towards the window, and it was good to see his face when he found I had been listening to his vindication of his absent comrade; a vindication carefully calculated to deepen in the minds of his hearers the impression that something was wrong, and that Captain Cameron was a very good fellow to take up the cudgels for him at all)—'pardon me, but you ought not to wonder how these reports arose, as you are perfectly well aware that it was through some foolish remarks of yours, for which you were obliged to apologise publicly as soon as you were known to be the author of them.'

'Ah, yes; I remember that,' he stammered, greatly confused. 'But I don't think all these rumours arose from that.' Here he stopped and busied himself in handing tea, looking all the time dreadfully small.

As for me, arming myself with a cup of tea, I marched straight up to Miss Meares, and presented it to her. Whilst she was drinking it, I could not resist showing my appreciation of her gallant defence of Hugh, and said:

'The absent have a true friend in you, Miss Meares, and you were right in every word you said, for a more upright and noble fellow than Melton does not exist.'

She glanced up brightly: 'I am so glad you agree with me; I cannot tell you how indignant I felt at hearing such vile aspersions of his good name, made by those who neither know him nor are capable of comprehending or appreciating him did they know him. Are you a friend of his?'

'I am proud to think that I am one of his most intimate friends,' I answered. 'Ever since he joined we have kept together, and every day only increases my liking for him.'

'Ah, then you must be Captain Cairnsford, of whom I have heard him speak. I am very glad to make your acquaintance. Captain Melton has talked so much about you, I had quite a curiosity to see you.'

As she said this she glanced at me somewhat critically, so much so that I felt inclined to ask her if she approved of his choice of a friend, when I saw Hugh enter the room, having just driven over; and thinking it better he should not become immediately taken up by Miss Meares's presence, I went over to where he was talking to our hostess, and persuaded him to come out for a stroll through the grounds, which were very prettily laid out, and looked most inviting that mild October evening. We strolled about for some time, I

smoking, Hugh rhapsodising over the beauties of the gorgeous autumnal landscape with its brilliant tints and hazy distance, till at length, finding a most inviting moss-covered seat near the house, and commanding a beautiful view, though itself hidden from observation, we sat down for a few minutes before returning to dine and begin the business of the evening, flirtation and dancing.

Suddenly we heard voices talking, which I immediately recognised as those of Miss Meares and Captain Cameron; my companion knew them also, as I saw from the contraction of his brow and quivering of his firmly-compressed lips. They were passing along a path at the foot of the hill, on the top of which we were seated; but as we were under the shadow of the trees, and the evening was already darkening, they did not see us. Their voices rang out distinctly on the evening air, so that we could not help hearing every word they were saying. We would have beaten a retreat, but that was not possible without confronting them, which neither Hugh nor I wished to do. The best thing under the circumstances seemed to be sitting still, as they would soon pass out of earshot. She was saying: 'Why did you not speak out more boldly for your comrade, Captain Melton, to-day? Only that I believe you honourable and upright as the day, I should have thought you did not wish to clear him from the imputation, your vindication was so feeble. I know well it was surprise at the charge, and not any unworthy motive, that made your reply so unsatisfactory; but tell me, what did Captain Cairnsford mean by saying that some foolish remarks of yours had given rise to the reports?'

I should think Cameron's face must have been a study for a physiognomist at this question; however, he answered in his most silky tones:

'Cairnsford alluded to my having said I wondered Captain James had not questioned Melton as to the hour at which he was in his room, and so on, with a view to finding out who were likely to be about at that particular time. I was overheard saying this, which was surely innocent enough, by Tufton, a young snob lately joined, who chose to build a whole host of slanderous rumours on it, and set them floating about the camp; but I was not to blame for it.'

'Of course not,' she answered; 'I am so glad you have been able to explain that, for I may now confess I had a kind of uneasy feeling from your manner. I don't think I doubted you, and yet I feared if after all you might not be such a man as I fancied you; for you know well my determination never to marry one in whose truth and honour I have not the most implicit confidence.'

As she said this, Melton seized my arm, and said hoarsely:

'Come away; I cannot hear any more, or I shall think myself a villain for not telling her at once what I know about this man, and I cannot, for I am bound by a promise.'

He dragged me away after him, taking the direction that led from the house, so that after about ten minutes' hurried stumbling through the tangled shrubbery and long damp grass we arrived at the demesne wall, on the outside of which ran the high road. Here he stopped and turned towards me, his face pale with contending passions and quivering with emotion, still visible in the now-deepening twilight, as he said :

'I can't go back to that house to-night, Charlie; make my excuses to Lady A.' Then seeing I was about to urge him, he added, 'Don't ask me. I cannot look in that innocent face and think that I am concealing from her what so nearly affects her happiness. I can't tell you either, or I would ask your advice. I am cut off from all help, and must let matters take their course. It is very hard, but my own folly has caused it all.'

He laughed bitterly as he spoke, and vaulting over the wall was gone in a moment. I remained for a few minutes rooted to the spot, musing deeply. At such times as this, when his self-restraint for a moment gave way, I could see how passionate his love was, stirring every fibre of his sensitive nature into action, and I could guess how intense were his sufferings at witnessing the happiness of his successful rival. Slowly I returned to the house, thinking over this most unfortunate business, and mentally stigmatising the young lady as a mercenary coquette, and the whole of them together as a set of impracticable fools.

I made Hugh's excuses to Lady A., and then joined the laughing, talking groups assembled, waiting for dinner to be announced; but all my former appreciation of Miss Meares had vanished, and I scrupulously avoided entering into conversation with her. After dinner the dancing began. I watched her without appearing to do so, and saw that she appeared absent and *distracte*, though she continued dancing with considerable energy with Cameron and others.

I don't care much for dancing, though when I find myself in a ball-room I generally go at it with a will, and do my duty in that line, as England, represented by her numerous spinsterhood, expects; still I confess that now and then, when you meet with an exceptionally good partner and are moving to the music of a first-rate band, there is real enjoyment in it, and in spite of my newly-conceived aversion to the beautiful heiress, I could not help thinking the Blue Danube Waltz with her for a partner would be pleasant. What an amount of nonsense the most sensible man talks at a ball, and what an appalling number of flirtations the most stony-hearted individual plunges into to the music of a swinging waltz, or under the still more potent influence of champagne and lobster-salad!

I fancy I did as much in that line as anybody else that night, though I don't now remember very clearly who most attracted my attention; but I do know that I left Lady A.'s at five o'clock A.M.,

with a very distinct idea that it was the pleasantest ball I had ever been at, and that if all my partners resembled Miss M. Rogers, I should not find dancing such a bore as I sometimes did. Anything so delightful as that ball must of necessity be followed up by unmitigated disagreeables; so that, though intensely disgusted, I was hardly surprised, when I made my appearance at three o'clock p.m. that day, to hear we had received the route for India, and were to embark in a day or two on board H.M.S. Echo at Gravesend.

CHAPTER V.

OUT TO INDIA.

Now all was bustle and confusion, rushing here and there to say farewell, distracting one's brains to frame adieux that, while sufficiently sorrowful, should not be enough so to excite suspicion of more tender sentiments than it was prudent to avow. I had a good many acquaintances about, and was so taken up by paying farewell visits and receiving farewell invitations, that I saw little or nothing of Hugh until the day when we found ourselves all on board the Echo. I might have obtained leave, and followed the regiment out by the Overland Route, if I had chosen to do so; however, I had preferred keeping along with the rest, especially as Hugh could not have remained behind with me.

Our quarters were tolerably comfortable; and I have no doubt the voyage would have been a pleasant one, if only Cameron had been moved by some good spirit to stay behind, and follow us overland. I had heard him talking of it before we left, but for some reason he had altered his mind; and there he was, with his sneaking self-complacent smile and his creeping insidious ways. Percy Langham, Templeton, and one or two others of the nicest set, were not with us; they would come out afterwards. But their absence contributed greatly, no doubt, to the disagreeable nature of the voyage. We had been only four or five days at sea, and going well before the wind as we were, Hugh and I found it not unpleasant. Those who had been sea-sick were recovering, and beginning to crawl about, reminding one of sickly caterpillars, with their feeble gait and enormous appetites.

Hugh and I were standing leaning over the taffrail in the stern—I smoking, Hugh gazing idly over the blue expanse of water, sparkling under the crisp clear sunlight of an autumnal morning, and ruffled by a gentle breeze into innumerable foam-tipped wavelets—when turning suddenly towards me with a kind of half-resentful, half-appealing look, he said:

'Charlie, have you noticed anything odd in the manner of our fellows towards me lately?'

I turned with a surprised negative on my lips, when, as I did so, I saw at a little distance Cameron talking to Brabazon, a nice young fellow, not long joined, to whom both Hugh and I had taken rather a fancy. They were both looking at us, but perceiving that I was watching them, they turned away with a kind of confused manner, and walked off. I then remembered that for the last day or two Brabazon never seemed to have time to come and chat with us in the stern as he used at first; and whenever we had tried to stop him for a minute, he had hurried away, saying, 'Excuse me, I am busy.' My answer, therefore, died away on my lips; for I began to feel that perhaps it might be as Hugh had suggested, though I had not yet remarked anything. He continued:

'I see, your silence tells me that you have noticed it. I am convinced Cameron is at the bottom of it. Wait and watch; you will see I am right; and if I am, I will tell you something I have hitherto kept concealed, greatly against my will, for I much wanted your counsel. A promise kept me silent, however; but I shall consider myself absolved from it—at least, with regard to you—if what I suspect be the case.'

We said no more then; but I was surprised at Hugh's mentioning a secret, as I thought we knew everything about each other; and also I was annoyed to think it possible that any one could presume to avoid him, or treat him as an unfit companion for the best among us.

I had not long to wait for confirmation of the suspicions Hugh had put into my head. That afternoon, as we sat in a snug little nook we had discovered among some coils of rope and bundles of sails, Brabazon and Solace came into our retreat, as though intending to sit there and smoke like ourselves.

'Ah, you have found out our hiding-place!' I exclaimed. 'Isn't it jolly? There's room for you two. Come and have a chat with us.'

'O, no; I don't think we can stay,' answered Brabazon hurriedly, looking at Hugh askance, and seeming nervously anxious to draw Solace away with him.

Hugh looked at him calmly for a minute or two without speaking, and then raising himself slowly, but with determination expressed in every movement, from the reclining position he had occupied, he said:

'You don't wish to be contaminated by my society. Isn't that it, Brabazon?'

The lad looked badly scared, and only stammered, 'I—I—don't know what you mean, Captain Melton.'

'Come, speak the truth like a man,' he answered sternly. 'Don't be afraid. I shall keep all my wrath for those who have filled your mind with evil thoughts of me. You must tell me,' he continued,

springing to his feet, and placing himself in front of the young fellow, who would gladly have escaped had he been able.

'Never mind, Brabazon,' interposed Solace at this juncture. 'Tell Melton everything; it will give him a chance of contradicting those vile stories which he has never before had, as he has never heard them clearly yet. As for me, I don't believe them, and so I told you when you repeated them to me.'

Thus encouraged, Brabazon, still greatly terrified, began :

'Cameron says he saw you enter Captain James's room, and passing the door without a thought of anything wrong, saw you opening the desk, which lay on a table near the centre of the room. He thought nothing of it at the time; but when he heard of the loss of the money, imagine his feelings. He says, Captain Melton, he was so taken aback by your effrontery in saying out boldly at mess that you had been in the room, that at first he thought you must have been innocent; but after that affair with Tufton he became uneasy, charged you with the theft to your face, forced you to acknowledge it, and then, he says, his first wrong step was taken. Instead of going on the spot to James or the colonel, and telling what he had discovered, he allowed himself to be persuaded into keeping the matter secret. Your penitence, he said, seemed so great and your grief so abject, that he really had not the heart to ruin your prospects in life without giving you one more chance. Now,' continued Brabazon, who, though a nice young fellow if he had not fallen into bad hands, had evidently been so well primed and schooled by Cameron, that he could hardly look at the matter from any point of view not sanctioned by that worthy, 'I should never have fancied Cameron to be good-natured enough to do that kind of thing; and I must say in this matter I think he was altogether too lenient.'

'Well, all I can say,' answered Solace, 'is, that his good-nature does not seem to be very great, when he cannot hold his tongue, but allows insinuations and rumours of all kinds to be bruited about, in a way that would destroy any man's character, no matter how innocent he might be of the charges brought against him, and that as the case stands will very likely drive Melton out of the regiment quite as surely as if he had told the colonel at first. I don't call that good-nature if you do.'

'I thought as you do at first,' replied Brabazon; 'but he explained that nothing would have induced him to betray the secret once he had allowed you, Melton, to remain in the regiment; but that when he saw me drifting into a friendship with you, taken by your charming manner and frank face, he then considered it his duty to warn me of the character of the man I was disposed to admire. Even then he did not speak out explicitly, only hinted darkly all was not right, till seeing at last that his innuendoes produced rather

a contrary effect from what he wished, he was obliged to be more distinct. Besides, he said that though fear had kept you from falling into a flagrant offence since then, still he saw by your manner that far from being repentant, you felt nothing but hatred for the man who had spared you. He says he now sees it would have been better such a character should have left the regiment at once, rather than remain in it to have the opportunity of influencing young fellows recently joined in a manner which can do them nothing but harm. Remember, Captain Melton,' Brabazon went on apologetically, 'I am only repeating Cameron's exact words, and am very sorry to pain you by doing so; only you would insist on hearing them, and he never gave me to understand I was not to repeat them.'

'Judging by physiognomy,' interrupted Solace, 'Cameron looks much more likely to commit a theft than Melton. Yet I cannot fancy such a knowing fellow would have committed himself by spreading scandals, unless he knew that you, Melton, were bound in some way or by some promise that would prevent your vindicating your character in the eyes of the world. However, I am glad now you have heard it all, and I for one will believe your simple denial in preference to Cameron's sneaking lies.'

'Thanks, Solace,' said Hugh, looking up dejectedly, but still proudly, into the young fellow's face. 'I think you know me well enough to judge the measure of faith you can attach to such slanders. Circumstances prevent my disproving them, as I might do; my lenial is all I can give you. To you I am sure it will be all that is necessary; to others I feel it will not be as worthy of belief as Cameron's aspersions.'

'It is enough for me,' said Solace, a nice young fellow, whom both liked; 'and I am glad to have your word, though I would have believed you without that. It is a pity you won't disprove them, though; for you know a great many people will try and catch hold of your silence to make the matter worse. Think it over, and see if you can show up his falsehoods. And now, Brabazon, that you have told all about it, and are, I hope, as satisfied as I am, we will go and take a turn on the quarter-deck.'

As their footsteps died away in the distance, and silence fell around us—for there was no one now anywhere near—I glanced at Hugh to see how he took this fresh evidence of his enemy's tiring, unpitying hate.

His face was buried in his hands, but his hurried breathing showed how keenly he felt the shame of such a charge. I pitied him for his misplaced trust, and though I never doubted his truth, I could see that Cameron had some hold over him that might avail to work his destruction. It was too true what Solace had said; though one or two might and would believe his word, by far the greater number would only exult in his downfall, and point to his

silence—springing, I was sure, from some noble cause—as the proof that the accusations of his enemy were true, and he had nothing to answer against them. I waited for a few minutes, and was then about to try some effort at consolation, though hardly knowing what to say, when he looked up, turning his frank honest eyes on me as he said, ‘Why, Cairnsford, are you still here?’

I knew well what he meant, and why he had not used the familiar name of Charlie, by which he had so long called me. I saw that the iron had entered into his soul; though why he should care about a stigma I felt confident he could remove I could not imagine. Still, he did care; he was cut to the heart, and even one who liked him less than I might have seen that his tone and words seemed to say, ‘You hear of what I am accused, and see that I make no defence; why have you not left me?’

It was time something should be done to show him that some at least remained faithful, and would not believe the slanders of the enemy; so laying my hand on his arm, I said gently:

‘Hugh, I shall be really angry if you can think me so false a friend, so unworthy a mind, as to turn from the one most dear to me on the strength of a slander spread by a man whom, of all others, I distrust and despise. You have told me you have some secret connected with him in your keeping. What it may be I know not; but I feel confident that it is to revenge himself for your having become acquainted with his secret he has invented this report, in the hope that though few would venture to disbelieve your denial, yet such a taint of suspicion would linger round you as might compel you to sell out, in order to escape its atmosphere. I see his plan, and a cunningly-devised one it is; but if you consider yourself sufficiently absolved from your promise by his conduct, tell me the mystery, and we will together devise some plan to make his villainy recoil on his own head.’

‘Dear friend,’ answered Hugh, grasping my hand, ‘I can never thank you enough for standing by me in this cruel trial. Let me think one minute before I tell you all.’

He rose and paced hurriedly up and down our narrow strip of deck. The flush had died away now from his brow, and his face looked white and worn; his lips were set in a rigid line of fierce determination; his dark eyes were painfully sad, and had a wild hunted look in them, as he glanced once or twice over the blue waters, heaving as he did so a short sigh. At length he stopped, and said in a low voice: ‘I can’t help it, Charlie; those who think badly of me must do so. What that young fellow said just now about Cameron reminds me of what I ought to do. A promise must be kept at all risks. He knows he is safe, or he would never have dared say such things of me. Do you remember the words of the old poem I showed you once?—

"Let me be false in others' eyes,
So faithful in mine own."

That is just my case; until he commits some more flagrant offence than inventing slanders about me, my lips are sealed. I see now I made a great mistake, and one that I fear will affect other lives, dearer to me than mine; but the die is cast—I must stand by and bide my time in patience.'

His voice shook as he turned away and again paced up and down, a deeper gloom than I had ever before seen there settling down on his once gay and careless face. Then he wheeled round suddenly; a light of determination breaking out over his countenance seemed to transform it into the likeness of one of those warrior angels of whom Raphael and Michel Angelo dreamed, as, facing me, he said: 'I tell you, whatever he thinks to do—and you say he intends to drive me out of the regiment—I will not go. He may persecute me by slanderous reports and malicious acts, he may blacken my character and darken my life, he may take friends and acquaintance from me, but he shall not get rid of me till the time during which I must watch him shall expire. Yes, Charlie, even though you were to turn against me—which God forbid!—I should still remain a poor despised outcast among all my former comrades.'

'But surely,' I answered, 'his behaviour towards you is quite such as to release you from any promise you may have made him. For my part, though I can't conceive what the secret can be between you two, yet I am sure, were I in your place, I should throw honour to the winds, have my revenge on him, and clear myself, as I feel convinced you could do if you chose.'

He signed me to be silent with an impatient gesture. 'Hush, for mercy's sake! You don't know how strong the temptation is. Don't add your voice to that of my natural selfish nature, which is urging me to forsake all the principles I have tried to live by, and gives me, with a force I find it almost impossible to resist, to clear myself from this charge even at the cost of my honour. How long it seems since I have had any rest—harassed, worried, annoyed on every side, dark looks and innuendoes among my comrades, a perpetual conflict between my heart and my reason—I that used to be so easy-going and light-hearted! I often wonder what will be the end of it.'

'You have truly had a hard time of it,' I answered; 'but remember, Hugh, the old proverb, "The night is ever darkest before the dawn." It is now as dark with you as it can well be; before long you will see light breaking through the clouds. Keep up a bold heart, and don't let your enemy think he has triumphed. I will, now I see his game, keep an eye on him; and if I find an opportunity of defending you and showing him up, depend upon me it shall not escape me.'

'I agree with you,' I said; 'trials are always
them boldly. Remember that there are many others
I and those whom you like best, that will stand by you
report and evil report. However, enough of this now
and forget care for a time; there is nothing comforts
smoke.'

Hugh assented languidly, taking a cigar with the
has lost all interest in life; but before long, under the
fluence of the narcotic, he brightened up a little, and
assumed a more tranquil expression. When we left
one would have guessed by his face through what anxiety
just passed, and the most keen-sighted amongst his
have observed no signs of flinching when he encountered
of avoidance or contempt.

So we sped gaily on towards the tropics—gaily at the
the sailing of the vessel; for providentially we encountered
favourable winds the whole way, otherwise we should have
ennui, as it may well be imagined a certain stiffness of
party, some of whom would neither look at nor speak to
indeed, I was the only one who kept up really friendly
with him; the few who did not believe Cameron's
not quite take Melton's innocence for granted, were
effort to bring forward proofs to establish it. Then, I
his constant companion, came in for some of the odium
him, though for that I did not care a straw, as, with
of Solace and some few others, they were not worth
Still it was dull, very dull, and thankful indeed I was
none of the usual calms that are generally so tiresome

softness to the brilliant tints beyond. After about ten minutes' lazy enjoyment of the novel effect, a vague wonder crept into my mind as to how it got there. Could some one be smoking, leaning out of the stern windows, or sitting among the cordage and chains? Yes, that was probably the cause of it; some of our fellows, no doubt, had chosen that place for a quiet chat. But who could it be? They were most of them in groups near us; I did not miss any one. So at last, out of pure curiosity, I determined to look over and see.

'I'll be back in a minute, Hugh,' I said, rising very slowly and, in spite of my curiosity, reluctantly, and making my way aft. When I arrived at the taffrail and leant over, no one was to be seen; but what I for a few seconds thought odd, there seemed to be hot vapour rising through the crevices of the planking, and the air smelt so strangely. What could it be? I sniffed once or twice, and then with overwhelming force the conviction rushed through my mind—the ship was on fire. To run forward and tell the captain was the work of an instant, and a minute later it was found that the large saloon in the stern, in which the ladies usually sat, was on fire.

Our men manned the pumps turn about with the blue-jackets, and we put in our turn with the rest, Hugh throwing aside his unfinished sketch, and working like a horse at whatever came under his hand.

'Where is Captain Cameron?' asked Solace, coming up hurriedly to where we were working, carrying away all inflammable articles from the proximity of the fire. He was in his shirt-sleeves like the rest of us, and though his face was pale, his voice was firm and clear as he spoke.

'I don't know,' Hugh answered shortly, as he turned to assist a marine vainly striving to move some ponderous article by his unassisted strength. 'Why do you want him?' he continued, wiping the sweat from his brow, as he staggered forward with his tired helper.

'Only that I haven't seen him doing anything, and I want him to come and help us. We must all work now if we wish to live.'

Suddenly from the forward part of the ship glided the man he was looking for, pale, haggard, and with big drops, brought there, not by toil, but by anguish and fear, standing on his brow, the very picture of abject terror.

'O,' he cried, with a pleading gesture of the hands, 'how are you getting on? Is the fire being got under? For mercy's sake, tell me quick!'

'The worst is to be feared, Captain Cameron,' answered Solace coldly, turning with disgust from the pitiable figure of his senior, for cowardice indeed changes the handsomest face into an abject and disgusting object; imagine, therefore, its effect on Cameron's sneaking countenance. For one moment he stared wildly at the brave youth, then a paroxysm of fear seized him, and forgetting all

who were present—his position, duty, everything—he raved and cursed his cruel fate in the wildest throes of mortal terror.

A minute's glance was all we could vouchsafe to this pitiable exhibition; when next we looked in that direction he was gone. A few minutes after, business took me forward, where a party of our men were taking breath after their spell at the pumps. A little apart from the silent weary group stood Sergeant Green, and talking eagerly to him, with violent gesticulations and hurried breathing, was Cameron, whom I had so lately seen in a state bordering on lunacy from intense terror.

'Well, he is better than I thought,' I observed to myself on seeing him; 'he is at least encouraging the men to work, if he won't do it himself.' But as I passed close behind him on my errand, judge of my surprise when I heard him say:

'We can get some of the men, sergeant; in the confusion it will be easy to slip some water and provisions on board, and then we will be off. It is the only way to escape certain death; once the fire gains the powder it is all up with us.'

'Captain,' answered Green, in the same imperturbable tone he would have used on parade—'Captain, there are many *men* of ours on board this vessel, but I hope not one coward;' then, with a salute that I fancied in its exaggerated respect expressed immeasurable contempt, he turned on his heel and rejoined his comrades.

How proud I felt of that man! I should have liked to have gone over and shaken hands with him, as I turned and hurried aft again, to see what other work there was for willing hands. Plenty there was of it for every one; but in spite of all efforts the fire seemed to gain ground. Here and there spits and tongues of flame might be seen shooting up through the planks, and gleaming redly through the glass skylights let in here and there in the deck, whilst volumes of smoke would burst out now and then through some unforeseen aperture, half smothering those who might be working near. I had forgotten all about the scene I had just witnessed, when suddenly I heard Hugh's voice, in a loud commanding tone, proceeding from among a knot of men gathered near one of the boats forward.

Curious to see what was the matter, and thinking I might be of use, I ran over; when I reached the spot his back was towards me, and I waited to hear what might be the matter before interfering. Two sailors, whom I recognised as among the black sheep of the crew, were lowering the boat over the side, whilst round them stood a knot of men, about ten in all, some soldiers, some sailors, but all of them well known to me as possessing an indifferent reputation with their respective officers.

In the centre of the group stood Hugh and Cameron, face to face with each other; Hugh was speaking loudly and in an authoritative manner, with his head up and his eyes flashing.

'I tell you, Captain Cameron,' he was saying as I approached, 'that you shall not do this thing if I can prevent it; and you,' he added, turning to the men, 'return every one of you to your duty, or I shall report you to your officers. Have you no shame, that you should try to leave the ship before all hope is lost? Think of your comrades toiling till the very life is worn out of them, to save themselves and the ship. Are you not ashamed to stand here concocting a villainous scheme, that must deprive some at least of the chance of safety if you succeed, and that if you do not succeed will not the less cover you with infamy?'

'That is all very fine,' sneered Cameron, a feeble spark of energy roused in him by hate and fear; 'but if I prefer to save myself rather than stick by this cursed tub till the flames reach the powder, and if these brave fellows choose to make an effort for their lives, none shall prevent us; you, if you make another attempt to stop us, shall be pitched into the sea; I can promise you that much, I think.'

Hugh laughed scornfully, and springing on the bulwarks caught hold of one of the davits to support himself, at the same time opening a large clasp knife, with which he intended to cut the rope if obliged; at least, as he told me afterwards, he intended to try and cut the rope, though well aware that his knife was a very weak weapon for such an undertaking.

As he opened the knife, Cameron, goaded to fury by the idea that his carefully prepared scheme was about to fail through Hugh's agency, aimed a blow at him with all his force. Involuntarily I sprang forward, intending to catch Cameron's arm, but before I could reach him the blow had been struck; missing his mark, Cameron overbalanced and fell heavily against the bulwarks, cutting himself pretty severely about the face and head. Then I caught Hugh by the arm, and dragged him down.

'What are you about,' I said breathlessly, 'standing up there, where a touch would knock you over into the water? Let us take that madman Cameron, and shut him up somewhere; it will then be easy to deal with the rest.'

We turned to look for him, and perceived Solace already assisting him to rise.

'Captain Cameron,' he said, 'you don't know what you are doing; you are not fit to be left alone; you must come with me and help us to work.'

Cameron staggered to his feet, fairly beside himself with rage.

'It is that fellow,' he yelled, pointing to Hugh; 'he is setting the men against me. I will be revenged for his cursed impudence.'

He struggled to get free from Solace, who, however, held him firmly, and answered:

'Captain Melton did his duty, and when you are in your calm judgment you will thank him for acting as he did. Now come with

me ;' so saying he went off, dragging his unwilling superior after him, who turned back for one minute to mutter a fierce curse on Melton, and swear with bitter emphasis he would be revenged. A few sharp words dispersed the skulkers, and then, turning again to our work, we found that in the interim the fire had been considerably got under, and there was now really some hope of saving the ship.

Animated by that hope we set to work again with a will, and in about half an hour enjoyed the luxury of resting for a few minutes without any fear of the fire, which was now completely got under. I could hardly help laughing as I surveyed several of the most dandified young fellows in the regiment, now looking like an assemblage of chimney-sweeps and coalheavers ; indeed, some of them were so begrimed as to be almost unrecognisable. As to Hugh, now the excitement was over, he looked indeed a dismal picture ; his fair hair singed, his clothes torn and dirty, and above all, an impatient anxious expression on his countenance. He smiled faintly as he looked at me, fancying, no doubt, that I was as queer-looking as he appeared to my eyes ; but beyond this feeble attempt at merriment he seemed to make no effort to shake off his depression, and presently began to busy himself setting things as much to rights as circumstances permitted.

Next time we were alone, however, he said : ' Could you have believed Cameron was such a mean-spirited ruffian ? I never saw a more thorough poltroon. It adds to the perplexity I was in before. How I am to act with regard to that man I cannot tell. It would be better for a woman to die than to marry a man so utterly dead to every noble and honourable feeling.'

From this remark I saw his thoughts had again reverted to Miss Meares, so I made no reply, and he pursued the subject no farther.

Though the fire placed us in rather unpleasant circumstances, from the amount of loss it entailed on many of us, and from the discomfort of the temporary accommodations we had to contrive to replace things destroyed, still it had one good effect ; others besides myself had seen Cameron's behaviour, and were no longer inclined to pay so much attention to his insinuations against Hugh, whose conduct had been as worthy of praise as his was of blame.

Sergeant Green had also indulged himself in making a fine story out of Cameron's proposition to him and his answer, which story rapidly spread, and soon became known to every one on board ; so that gentleman, now thoroughly sobered by finding the estimation in which his conduct was held, found himself presently left pretty much to his own resources.

This fire was the only event of importance that occurred to break the monotony of our life during the voyage out. When we arrived at the Cape we made ourselves more comfortable, and replaced the

most necessary of those articles that had been destroyed; but our stay was short notwithstanding, and we were soon dancing over the waves of the Indian Ocean on our way to Calcutta.

How pleased we all were when, after a fearfully tedious, though on the whole rapid, voyage, we found ourselves at last slowly sailing up the Hooghly, with its gay villas and shady gardens, presenting pleasant pictures to eyes so long wearied by gazing over the monotonous expanse of ocean! How intense was our delight as we once more stood on dry land, and how really enjoyable was the week we spent in Calcutta, before proceeding up the country to the small town of A——, where we were to be stationed!

This little town lay near the Himalayas, and was at this period used as an outpost, on account of the lawless predatory habits of some of the mountain chieftains, which rendered the constant supervision of the British Government and a tolerably powerful executive necessary.

It was not a bad quarter after all, and some of us managed to make ourselves very comfortable. There was plenty of sport, and many a good day Hugh and I had among the hills. Though at the foot of hills, our station was intensely hot, and most tantalising it was to see far away the summits of endless mountains rising one above the other in bewildering confusion, until their snowy peaks seemed to pierce the blue vault above. Hugh revelled in the endless beauties they spread out before him of form and colour, while I took every opportunity of getting a ramble over their unexplored pathways, with my gun on my shoulder and a pleasant companion by my side.

CHAPTER VI.

CAMERON'S VISITOR.

THERE are drawbacks to every place, and the drawback to A—— was, as far as I was concerned, that it did not agree with me. The intense heat brought on a kind of low fever, which, though it did not quite lay me up, yet made every pursuit, whether in connection with my duty or otherwise, a burden to me. Our medico assured me I should soon get over it; in the mean time I had better keep quiet, and avoid all exertion during the heat of the day.

So it chanced that one day, as I was lounging in an easy-chair by my window, getting the benefit of the cool breeze that at that hour (it was half-past seven in the evening) was beginning to steal down from the mountains, I heard a vehicle approaching the barracks. Curiosity prompted me to raise a corner of the mat that shaded the window, and look out. My window commanded a view of the drive up the compound to the door, and I saw a kind of covered carriage of primitive and dilapidated appearance driving up. It

stopped at the door, and then I, still keeping myself concealed, saw seated inside a very handsome woman.

But who could she be coming to see? Every one was out with the exception of myself—Hugh sketching, a lot of the others shooting, and Cameron I thought visiting. As for me, I had never set eyes on this lady before; so certainly her visit was not intended for me. I did not hear for whom she asked, but in a few minutes Cameron appeared, and then I saw I had been mistaken in supposing him away. He handed her out, and before she disappeared with him through the doorway, I obtained even a better view of her than I had at first been able to do.

She was tall, with a perfect figure, which was displayed to the greatest advantage by a light muslin dress, over which was thrown carelessly a magnificent black-lace shawl that rather enhanced than concealed the effect. In stepping out of the carriage she displayed a slender foot, with an instep arched as that of an Arab, while the hand that rested ungloved on his arm was small and white, the taper fingers sparkling with jewels. A perfect hand it was, and you would have said, had you not seen the face, it must have belonged to a lady. As to her face, it was gloriously beautiful, complete in every feature, and wanting only the nameless charm of refinement, without which beauty is to some minds valueless. Imagine a broad white brow, with pencilled eyebrows of the most perfect form surmounting eyes large and dark as a gazelle's; a peach-like bloom on her cheeks set off the clear olive complexion; while her mouth would have been lovely, showing as it did when she smiled the most perfect teeth, had it not been for the indescribable expression, more visible in the mouth than elsewhere, that we call want of refinement,—imagine such a face surrounded by a profusion of raven hair, which was ornamented with the daintiest tulle bonnet, the head set gracefully on the most queenly form, and you will have some idea of the personal appearance of Cameron's strange visitor.

As she entered the doorway she spoke, and her voice sounded soft and sweet, 'that most excellent thing in a woman,' as it reached me; while her laugh, in answer to some remark of Cameron's, was clear and silvery: very pleasant to listen to, I thought, as I lay back in my chair thinking of that perfect face, and deciding that whatever want of refinement it indicated, it must be in mind, and not in manner, as her voice and laugh convinced me that outwardly, at least, she was all a lady ought to be. I lay lazily in my chair by the open window, listening dreamily to the hum of voices in Cameron's room next mine, and feeling a kind of vague pleasure in the sound of low laughter that stole out now and then on the evening air.

Presently they moved near the window, which was beside mine, not more than a yard distant at most, and I heard the woman's

voice say in persuasive accents that I am sure would have found their way round any man's heart :

'And now, dear, tell me all about this Maud Meares, that some one said you were going to marry. I only laughed when I heard it—I couldn't doubt you; still, I thought when I saw you I would ask about it.'

As the name of Cameron's betrothed fell on my ears, I began to listen attentively; in fact, the whole sentence was so extraordinary, and this fascinating being's relation to Cameron seemed so equivocal, that I had little difficulty in persuading myself that for Miss Meares' sake, even if not for Hugh's, I was quite right to play the part of eavesdropper. Besides, I argued, if I find there is nothing wrong, it cannot matter my having listened or not; if, on the contrary, there is anything not quite as it ought to be, the sooner it is found out, and that fellow's little game put a stop to, the better. Drawing my easy-chair therefore nearer to the window, and leaning a little outside, I prepared myself for what, even when making the best of it, I felt to be not an honourable occupation.

Cameron laughed a little at her question, and answered in a more cynical manner than I could have fancied any man would have used to such a woman :

'You were right not to mind what any fellow might report about me. You know we are married, so you are safe whatever may happen; though no one knows how we stand with regard to one another. You have kept our secret, I hope?' he added, with some sternness.

'Indeed, Edward, I have,' she replied earnestly; 'though why I should do so, I can't see. And when I hear such things said of you, I do long to hold up my head boldly, looking people in the face, as I have a right to do, and saying, "Your stories are false; I am his wife, and no woman shall come between us while I live."'

'Well, well,' he answered, in an impatient bored manner—for which I felt it in my heart to kick him, so much had my sympathies been enlisted by the sweet wifely words and tender caressing manner of the beautiful stranger—'you know I don't like declamation or heroics—they bore me; and you are getting a little into that style now and then; try and get out of it, dear. As to why our marriage should be kept a secret, I told you long ago that my embarrassments would not permit me to declare it; as to this report, why, you must encourage it as much as you can, as at present it is my only help in keeping my head above water. The Jews will wait, in hopes of reaping a golden harvest when it comes off, as this Miss Meares is a great heiress. Indeed, I have been thinking that it would not be a bad move for either you or me could it be accomplished.'

There was a pause after this sentence, during which interval of silence a feeling of horror stole over me of this fair calm-looking

man, with his quiet gentle ways, his smooth persuasive voice, and his womanish attention to personal appearance, who concealed a soul so vile, a mind so base, as not only to plan such a scheme, but to dare to talk over it boldly and openly with his young wife.

The dead silence was at last broken by that sweet voice, saying in a hesitating tone that told an eloquent tale of horror, astonishment, and pain :

‘I—I—don’t quite understand you, Edward, I think. Surely I can’t have heard aright!’

‘O, yes, quite right,’ he answered, with a laugh that sounded unpleasantly sneering. ‘You needn’t look shocked; no harm can come to you whatever I do. Remember you are quite safe; and don’t trouble your head about this Miss Meares, who is after all the only one to be pitied. What I want you to do is this: I am engaged to marry this Miss Meares—have been so, in fact, since we were children—and had no right to marry you. Now, if you are only wise and keep our secret, what is to prevent my marrying this girl in England? I shall never bring her out here; and her money will enable me to give you those luxuries I have so long wished to shower upon the only woman I ever met who had sufficient attraction for me to induce me to forego the brilliant future opened out before me as the husband of the heiress Maud Meares. It is only my love for you that makes me desire this. Other men can adorn those they love with jewels and costly garments, as I would like to do my beautiful darling; whilst I, with all the affection I feel for you, have never been able to give you more than those few paltry trinkets that look so unworthy the beauty they adorn. And it will not harm Miss Meares either; no one will know of your existence, and she will certainly have the best of the position as my wife. After all, in other countries men may have more wives than one, though our stupid laws are against it. Still, I don’t see the harm if it can be managed.’

He laughed sneeringly and brutally as he finished, but a low wailing cry from his wife interrupted him.

‘O Edward, Edward, don’t say that! What is the matter with you to-day? Don’t you know that you are proposing a fearful crime? If you love me, how can you think for a moment of marrying this other woman, and letting her usurp my rightful place, no matter how great her wealth? And if you do not love me, or have found the love of your childhood dearer and sweeter than mine, how have you forsworn yourself and deceived me! Tell me—what is she like, this English heiress, with a store of gold vast enough to buy men’s affection, or at least the semblance of it?’

The piteous tone died out of her voice as she asked this last question, in eager jealous accents that quivered, in spite of a brave effort to be calm.

'What is she like?' he asked lazily; and I heard him strike a fusee, preparatory to lighting a cheroot. 'Well, that is a more sensible question than the tragedy-queen performance you began with; so I'll answer it. Let me see: she is small and slight; a beautiful little figure; very fair, with lots of lovely golden hair, all in loose waves like yours, but the most delicious gold colour. Indeed, her whole colouring is very brilliant and delicate, quite like one of the dainty little figures one sees sometimes in Sèvres china. As a rule, heiresses are ugly and vulgar-looking, but she's a remarkable exception to the rule.'

He ceased speaking with the same lazy sangfroid, but she went on passionately:

'O, why did you ever tell me you loved me! Your heart is with this blonde beauty, born to a happier fate than mine; for you love her, as she doubtless loves you; but not as I loved you—not as I love you,' she corrected herself—'I, a child of this burning climate, with warmer love and fiercer hate, more intense affections, more cruel jealousy than her cold northern nature can feel. Was not my future dark enough, without my paltry beauty catching your idle fancy, to be the toy of a fleeting passion, and to be flung aside when you wearied of it?'

'Hush!' he said impatiently, interrupting her. 'Now you are raving, and making a fool of yourself besides. If, as you elegantly express it, you were the toy of a fleeting passion, you would not be my wife; and that you are certainly, though perhaps now I might be as well pleased if I had not been in such a hurry to put the noose round my neck. As to my loving her, believe me, dearest, you are a thousand times sweeter and more charming to me than any other woman who ever breathed. I don't care a fig for her, but I want her money; and as for her, I don't think she likes me, though I believe she tries to persuade herself she does; and I am pretty sure she cares a good deal for that hang-dog fellow, Hugh Melton, curse him!'

'Then, Edward darling,' said the beauty, in a calmer voice, 'how can you wish so to wrong both her and me? Of myself I will say nothing; you must know all I have to say as well as I; but only think of her. What has the poor girl done that this sin and shame should be brought upon her? Let her marry that man, if she can care for him after being engaged to you. Are you sure she doesn't love you?' she added. 'Are you only telling me that about the other man to turn my suspicions aside, because you love her yourself? Swear to me you are telling me the truth. Only a little while ago, and I should not have asked you to swear; I should have believed your word; but now you are so strange, I almost fear you. Why did you tell me all this, and say those dreadful things? I know you were only trying me, but I can't bear it. Promise me not to talk so any more, won't you?'

With the most coaxing and persuasive voice, in which there was still a tremor of fear and passion, she uttered these words, and I could fancy how, as she said it, her white hands wound themselves around his neck, and her beautiful lustrous eyes looked pleadingly up into his.

But blandishments and prayers were alike wasted on him; he had begun his subject, and he meant to go through with it; he continued therefore :

‘The reason she don’t marry Hugh Melton is that he is a beggar, with nothing but his pay, and her fine fortune goes to the dogs, or somewhere equally satisfactory, if she does not marry me; and marry her I will. I am going home in a year’s time to do it; so I would advise you to keep quiet, madam, and not spoil my little game, or it will be the worse for you.’

‘But I will spoil it,’ she cried; ‘I will spoil it. Do you think I will stand by quietly and see you ruin another life as you have ruined mine? Is it not enough for one woman to have married a villain, who will darken her future life by the curse of an unrequited affection, without another being dragged down by the same man to a darker misery, a deeper shame? No; I have here the copy of my marriage register; I always carry it with me; as a precious treasure at first, henceforth as a safeguard against treachery. O Edward, I thought you loved me! Say you will give up all thoughts of Miss Meares; I will forgive you everything, for I love you still; even though you had perpetrated the deed you threaten, Heaven help me, I believe I should love you even then.’

‘Where did you get that copy of the register?’ was all the answer he vouchsafed to her passionate appeal.

‘You know,’ she answered—and there was a sound of coming tears in her plaintive voice—‘I got the copy the day we were married at St. Margaret’s in Calcutta. Don’t you remember? And you laughed at me, and called me a goose. O, in those days, Edward, you did love me, say what you will. Why can you not do so again?’

‘Show me that,’ he answered, laughing. ‘Who said I didn’t love you? I do, dearly; but then you must let me show it in my own way, and that’s by making you as rich as I can. Yes, the copy’s all correct,’ he continued, from which I knew she had given it to him, as desired. The next minute I heard a fusee struck, then a quick sharp cry in the woman’s voice, a sound as of some one springing rapidly forward, and then in Cameron’s cynical sneering tones: ‘Too late, my dear; that little relic will never comfort you, or trouble me, again; and perhaps you were not aware that the greater part of St. Margaret’s was burnt down about two months ago, and the vestry, with the books in it, was burnt along with the rest.’

No clamorous outcry, no passionate burst of weeping, followed

a dastardly act; for a few seconds the silence was so dead, that I almost thought she must have fainted; but hardly was this formed than it was again dispelled by hearing her moan, in a low plaintive voice that told of more heartfelt suffering than the best weeping:

'O Edward, how could you do that! My only safeguard; and my wife—you know I am.'

'I never disputed that fact,' he answered, in high good humour, 'nor shall I as long as you keep quiet, and let no one know of your position to me; but if I find you troublesome, you are without proofs, remember, and I shall remember that also; so beware, for no credit will be given to your assertion, unbacked by proof.'

She had borne every insult, every stinging sneer, quietly hitherto, but now her spirit rose up against her tyrant and tormentor, the man who, alas for her, she yet loved; she turned on him with defiant words and a tone almost of hate vibrating in her voice; there was no quick-drawn breath, no sobbing sound, such as other women would have been unable to restrain; quietly and distinctly, one by one, her words fell on the soft evening air.

'Very well,' she said, 'let this be a bargain between us; I will be nothing, and keep out of sight and notice as long as you desire, thereby proving myself willing to obey you as a wife should. But if I go near this woman, this heiress, with words of love that belong of right to me—if you, who are bound both by the laws of God and man to me, dare to speak of marriage to her—I swear that I will follow you, even though I had to beg my bread by the way; I would follow you across the ocean that would then separate us, and into your stately home, to expose you in your right character, and to claim my right before all men. Heaven help me then!—I, who loved you when I thought you faithful, tender, and noble above all men; I, who love you still, when I know you viler than the worst parish in the empire; for then your spirit, cold and cruel as it now, will turn tenfold more against me, and I shall fall a victim to your hate, as I did when I married you to your pretended love.'

She paused, overcome by the violence of her emotion; for as she had continued speaking, more passion, more intense misery, was betrayed by her tone; and he, without waiting for her to continue, as he had intended to do so, went on:

'Very well done indeed, Julia. I should advise you, instead of begging your bread when you want to raise the wind, to take to the theatrical stage; you would bring down the house if you looked and acted like that; in the mean time it is waste of talent to declaim at any longer; besides, it is getting late, and those fellows will be coming back. You put up at Booderabad, don't you? Stop there a day or two, and I will go over and see you. Wait; you must have something to eat before you go, you look really tired. I am

afraid, after all, you haven't strength for a tragedy queen; you would get done up in no time.'

Talking in this half-sneering, half-affectionate manner, I heard him moving about the room, and presently ordering some refreshment to be brought up. In the mean time I was told my horse was waiting for me (I was in the habit of riding at this hour), and though longing to hear if anything more of interest would pass between this curious couple, I thought it best to go out, consoling myself by reflecting that I knew all it was necessary I should know. Hardly thinking of where I was going, I turned my pretty Arab's head in the direction of Booderabad, and set off at a rapid pace; it was my object to get as much exercise that evening into as short a space of time as possible, so I gave my little steed his head, and away he went through the deepening gloom at the rate of a fox-hunt.

It was a pretty hilly road, shadowed on either side by groves of stately trees, interspersed with the little gardens attached to the huts of the natives. Not a very lonely road either, as it was a favourite resort with the residents of the little town of A——; and for a mile or two I met no end of people I knew. At last the road became more deserted, and I fell into deep thought about what I had just heard. The moon rose red and full in the heavens; my little Arab, with praiseworthy attention to his own interests, slackened his pace, gradually dropping into a walk; but I neither saw nor felt anything. I thought only with impotent anger of Cameron's brutality, and of the lovely and tender woman whom a cruel fate had placed so completely in his power. I wished much that I knew her, and could offer her counsel and advice; I fancied, with a friend to protect her and support her interests, she would be able to make better terms with her ruffianly husband. My chance was nearer than I expected. Whilst I rode on thoughtfully, pondering on the ways and means of making her acquaintance, a rumbling noise in the distance, and an uneasy motion on the part of my horse, roused me out of my reverie, and obliged me to concentrate my attention on what then came under my eyes.

Before me the road took a sudden bend, following the course of the river, along the banks of which it ran. There was no parapet or wall of defence between the road and the river, only the smooth edging of greensward, and the water just there looked deep and dark. The moon had risen bright and full; it was by its light I made these observations; but nothing lay before me that could account for the restlessness manifested by my horse. The rumbling noise continued, and seemed to approach nearer, coming from behind. I turned and gazed back over the road I had travelled, gleaming white in the moonlight, and presently fancied I could discern a dark object moving along it with considerable velocity.

tempted by curiosity, I turned and rode to meet it ; but I had only gone a few yards when I became aware that the dark object was a carriage, bearing down on me with the rapidity of lightning. A glance sufficed to show that the horse was running away. Instantly, I found out afterwards that the driver had been smoking opium, when the horse took fright he was incapable either of managing or keeping his seat, and fell off into a heap of dust by the roadside, where he was found next day fast asleep and quite comfortable.

Though I was not at the first minute aware there was no danger, yet I saw plainly that unless help was speedily rendered, the driver, occupants, and horse must all go into the river, which was deep enough there to make the mere idea of such a contingency unpleasant. I turned, therefore, and as the runaway approached, I put my little Arab into a brisk canter, increasing gradually to a full gallop ; when the vehicle came up with me, I, galloping alongside the horse, seized his rein. We were now so close to the runaway, going so fast and so straight at it, that there was no possibility of stopping before we should get to the brink. However, by a sudden exertion of strength, and thanks to the excellent training of the steed, we swung round the curve of the road so close to the edge that the outside wheel must have been on the verge of the precipice. That danger past, I breathed freely ; and although it took some time to stop the furious animal, I succeeded at last, and when he was fairly at a stand, it seemed to me he was not likely to start away again soon. He was covered with foam from head to tail, reeking with sweat, and seemed so done up that his limbs trembled under him. He was not a bad-looking beast, and I dare say when fresh had a temper of his own, which accounted for the part in which I had just played a part. Leaving my gallant little Arab at liberty, but still holding fast the reins of the runaway, I approached the door of the vehicle. It was one of those curious enclosed conveyances with curtains drawn all round, resembling the palanquins of the Turkish women, and it seemed somehow familiar to my eyes. Yes, as I looked at it again I became convinced that it was the same curious vehicle that had excited my wonder that morning as it drove up to the barracks. With more eagerness than I yet felt, I approached the curtained aperture that served for a door, and drawing back the screen peered anxiously in. I had hardly done so when a dark form bent forward from the interior, and said in Hindoostanee :

'Are we safe, Mahmoud ? What was the matter ? I thought you would have been killed.'

The voice was the same sweet voice I had heard in Cameron's room, but it trembled now a little from fear, as it then had from pain. It was evident she did not know that her servant had been to blame, and also that he had disappeared, where or how I

could not at that time tell. I stepped back a little to let the moonlight stream into the carriage, and answered :

'Mahmoud is not here, madam ; I am a stranger. I happened to be passing, and was fortunate enough to be able to stop your horse, which was running away. Where your driver can be I am unable to imagine, but I hope you will allow me to assist you in any way you may desire. If you will tell me where you live, I will conduct you home.'

She seemed frightened on hearing a strange voice, and at first shrank back into the dark recesses of the carriage ; as I went on, however, curiosity mastered fear, and I could see her lean forward eagerly to catch sight of my face in the moonlight. I bore her scrutiny calmly, though it was long and keen ; indeed, I was beginning to feel uncomfortable, not knowing what to say next, when she answered : 'I will trust you ; I think I may ; your face looks kind, and I have no one here to help me. I do not live near here, but I am staying at Booderabad. I am stopping in one of the bungalows on this side of the town ; Mrs. Camden's. You can ask some one to direct you to it when we get near there, if it is not troubling you too much to ask you to drive me.'

'Not any trouble at all ; I shall be most happy,' I answered, though wondering a little how on earth I was to get back to A—— that night, and thinking what a row Ali (my syce) would make when his pet Sultan did not return at the usual time. However, the lady seemed to have nothing farther to say ; so I got into my saddle again, and started the jaded steed on its homeward road in a broken shambling trot. A weary ride that was to me, at first flogging the tired brute till I was in a white heat and completely exhausted ; then at length toiling along at a foot pace, scolding, coaxing, and otherwise encouraging the animal, that all the time paid no attention to my blandishments, but chose his own pace with a sublime disregard of any convenience but his own. Ten weary miles we thus passed over before reaching the little town of Booderabad. The moon was setting, it was about one o'clock in the morning ; in another two hours people would be bestirring themselves ; but in the mean time here we were at Booderabad, and no one could be seen either to guide me to Mrs. Camden's, or, after I arrived there, to tell me where I might find a place to rest myself and horse before returning. At this moment the curtain at the door of the carriage was drawn back and the lady looked out, trying in the dim light to make out the bungalow to which she wished to be driven.

After several wrong turns and bewildering mistakes we at last arrived at the right house, where, however, we were kept nearly half an hour knocking before any one came to let us in. The lady, before going in, thanked me in the most earnest manner for the service I had been able to render her, and when she entered I delivered

the vehicle and horse to the servant, and followed him with my own, in hopes of finding some place where I might put up. As I expected, I found accommodation for my horse at the stable where the vehicle had been hired, but was not quite so fortunate with regard to myself, as it was fully half an hour later before I found myself housed at last in a hot and not over-comfortable lodging. I might have been worse off, however, and besides was tired; so that I was soon fast asleep, and forgot for a time the startling discoveries of the day and Ali's anxieties at my non-appearance.

CHAPTER VII.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

WHEN I awoke the next day, the sun was too high for me to think of returning until the evening. I accordingly determined to call and inquire after my acquaintance of the previous evening before returning to A——. At about six o'clock, therefore, I sallied forth, and soon found myself at the bungalow where I had stood knocking for so long in vain the night before. This time I was not kept waiting, but was immediately admitted. Mrs. Cameron—for so I knew her to be, though of course I did not so address her—was reclining on a sofa near the window, languidly embroidering flowers on a piece of silk. She looked thoroughly worn out by her long vigil of the past night, and I thought there was a more heartbroken expression in her pale face than could be accounted for by any one who had not overheard, as I had done, her yesterday's dialogue with her brutal husband.

She seemed pleased to see me, and roused herself into something like animation whilst she thanked me again fervently for my assistance the night before. After she had done, I ventured to ask her name, saying that I hoped she would excuse my taking such a liberty, in consideration of the services she was pleased to say I had rendered her. At this she coloured violently, and fidgeted nervously with the work she still held in her fingers; but at length replied: 'I cannot tell you how sorry I am not to be able to answer your question; one, too, which I think you have quite a right to ask, after having been put to so much inconvenience and trouble by me. It is not my secret, however, it is my—husband's.' She paused before saying the last word, and added it in so low a tone that I could hardly catch it.

I was now quite at a loss how to proceed; for you may well imagine I had come to call with the full intention of telling Mrs. Cameron all that I had overheard, and also that I intended to repeat it to both Hugh Melton and Miss Meares. When I saw her in her pale fragile beauty before me, looking so sad and sorrowful,

I felt almost as if I should be committing a crime by saying anything to agitate and annoy her; yet I knew that it must be done, and that it would be better for her to know the worst, that she might prepare herself for meeting her husband when he should know his wicked plans were discovered. I therefore continued in as cool and unconcerned manner as I could assume: 'It does not matter; I only asked for form's sake, as I know your name, Mrs. Cameron.'

She started violently as I pronounced her name, and turned on me a white despairing face as she exclaimed: 'You know it! How did you discover it? O, for Heaven's sake tell no one! What shall I do? He will never forgive me!'

She did not cry hysterically or loudly; but I could see from the trembling of her slender fingers as she pressed her handkerchief to her eyes that her grief was more intense and painful than more noisily expressed emotion. I tried to comfort her as best I could, saying that it was from her husband quite as much as from herself I had heard it, and that I should not have mentioned my discovery to her, knowing well her desire to keep it secret, only for the fact that I was bound to tell it to my friend Captain Melton, who was interested very nearly in the matter, and to Miss Meares, whom Captain Cameron had designed to be the sufferer by his crime. Beyond us three the story should not go, and Captain Cameron might feel himself perfectly safe if only he would renounce his designs. I then went on to explain how I became acquainted with the fact of her relation to Captain Cameron, at first hearing without intending, afterwards listening long and earnestly from design; my motive I considered being such as to absolve me of all wrong-doing in the matter. On hearing how I became acquainted with her story, all traces of grief and sorrow were for a moment smothered in the fierce blaze of resentment and scorn with which she turned on me.

'Is it possible,' she said, fronting me with flashing eyes and crimson cheeks, 'that you can have been base enough to play the part of a spy on two people in no way connected with you, and with no object? I should not have thought such meanness possible, had you not accused yourself.' As she spoke she rose and turned to leave the room.

'Stay one moment and hear me,' I entreated. 'You say I played the part of a spy without an object; in that you are mistaken, and it was to explain that object to you that I mentioned the subject at all. The honour and happiness of two friends of mine, one of them dearer to me than anything else on this earth, are intimately connected with this discovery; besides, I had some faint hope I might have been a friend to you, and by my knowledge of the fact as it is have stood between you and your husband's wrong-doing.'

'Who are you,' she answered haughtily, 'to accuse my husband of wrong-doing? Allow me to be the judge of that. As to your

friends, I suppose you love Miss Meares, from what you say, or perhaps her money, and would be glad, by marrying Captain Cameron's chance, to secure your own.'

This was too much, and I began to feel angry; but by a violent effort succeeded in preserving my composure.

'So be it,' I answered; 'if you think the case stands thus, I shall not contradict you, as surely you must see that even if I only married her for her money, it would be better and happier far I should do so than that she should fall a victim to Captain Cameron's criminal designs. I came to you to-day with the intention of entreating you to join me in defeating them. If you have a woman's heart, you will surely aid me in saving this hapless girl, whose vast wealth has as yet only served to render her a mark for the machinations of scheming villains. As for me, if you think I design to profit by any assistance you might render to break off her engagement to Captain Cameron, I will willingly promise once she knows all never to see her again.'

'Then,' she said, with wide astonished eyes, 'you do not love her? Are you not Captain Melton of whom I have heard Captain Cameron speak?'

'No, indeed,' I answered; 'he is the friend of whom I spoke, as dear to me as my own life. It is for his happiness, not my own, I solicit your help. Surely you will not refuse my request.'

'And does he love the girl?' she asked, in a dreamy irrelevant manner, as though she had only half heard my answer.

'He does,' I replied, 'as you love Edward Cameron, as you once fancied he loved you.' I thought I saw signs of relenting in her mood as she stood half turned away from me in a pensive attitude, evidently pondering all she had just heard.

'In that case he will deceive her and make her miserable, as Edward has done me,' she answered impulsively; then, seeing she had made an admission she never intended to have made, she went on with the view of changing the subject: 'Why do you love Captain Melton so dearly? Is he nobler and wiser and truer than other men? He should be to merit your devotion.'

'He is all that, and more,' I replied eagerly, feeling that I had, without knowing it, touched some hidden chord in her heart, and anxious to pur sue any advantage; 'he is a man whose life is noble and upright before the world, generous and tender to his friends, who has helped many a wandering soul back into the right path, and who even in his conduct towards your husband, his rival, has shown himself worthy of all praise.'

'Then he cannot love her,' she answered quickly, 'or, noble though he might be, he would have stood his ground, and struggled for her against all comers, be they who they might, notwithstanding, and in spite of, any previous engagements. I cannot feel pity for

your friend; he is a cold-blooded, cold-hearted lover, not one who would serve for the woman he loved through life to death, as true love should, overbearing and overcoming all obstacles.'

'That is one kind of love,' I answered, moved in spite of myself by her earnestness; 'and do not think but that a man like my friend, ardent, passionate, impulsive, must have longed, as only such bold natures can long, to set the world at defiance and obtain his love, in spite of her parents' wishes, her plighted troth, and her own qualms of conscience. But there is another nobler and purer love—surely you know it—a love that desires the good of the beloved object only, and is content to suffer if that object may be happy. Melton hoped long, hopes still perhaps, that he acted for her good in yielding to Cameron's claim; but how can I, knowing what I know, allow him to continue in this belief, when surely sooner or later the truth will come to light, and he will see that, far from securing her happiness, he has only brought about her shame? They were made for each other; think what happiness you may confer on them by standing forward now, and releasing them from their self-imposed misery.'

As I ceased speaking she turned towards me with a smile.

'I have heard of Orestes and Pylades,' she said, 'but never could form any idea of what their friendship was like until now; but for the sake of argument we will suppose for a moment (what, remember, I have never admitted) that Captain Cameron is my husband. Am I to prefer the happiness of these two strangers to my husband's good? I think your creed somewhat curious. I am to be faithful to the cause of true love as exemplified by this interesting couple, while to my love for my own husband I may be as false as I please.' She paused here, the flush dying out of her cheeks; then with a face set and as rigid as marble she went on: 'But I entirely deny the truth of what you have overheard, and, in support of what I say, I refer you to Captain Cameron himself, who will doubtless satisfy your mind upon the matter.'

As she finished speaking she tottered a few paces forward, groping like a blind person for some support on which to lean, and had I not caught her and led her to the sofa she would have fallen.

I felt that I could do nothing more than I had done, and that the poor lady was too much troubled to hear anything more on that subject; I therefore turned to summon an attendant with whom I might leave her, when coming with his usual noiseless cat-like step through the open doorway I beheld Captain Cameron himself. As yet his wife had not perceived him, and for a second or two we stood looking at each other without moving or uttering a word, so completely were we taken aback. Cameron's self-possession never deserted him for long, however, and after the first startled pause he began:



'How did you become acquainted with this lady, Cairnsford? I was not aware that she had any friends in our regiment except myself.'

As he spoke he advanced and held out his hand with a coolness and ease of manner that would have thrown any one not acquainted with the facts of the case off the scent.

It was no good my beating about the bush; I knew he was sure to find out from his wife the extent of my knowledge the minute I had left; I therefore answered him boldly:

'I had the pleasure of making Mrs. Cameron's acquaintance yesterday evening, as she was returning from A——. I was not aware until yesterday that you were married; I always fancied you were engaged to Miss Meares.'

When I spoke of Mrs. Cameron he started visibly, and a look came over his face I thought it just as well she did not see, her face being covered with her hands; but as I went on, intending to complete his discomfiture by the mention of Miss Meares, he recovered himself, and I found that, as many others have done, I had injured the effect of my speech by saying too much, instead of adding to its force as I had intended.

'My wife!' he said, laughing scornfully as I finished. 'Why, Cairnsford, who would ever have thought you soft enough to believe such a story? What you say about Miss Meares is perfectly true, and therefore, you see, I cannot have a wife already, though you are so blind as to present to me one as lovely as the lady before us.'

His sneering cynical manner and jeering smile enraged me. I felt somehow that this man, who had not truth or good intentions on his side, was more than a match for me, though I was doing what I thought right to the best of my ability. Exasperated beyond all bounds of circumspection and self-control, I turned to his wife and endeavoured to obtain her witness.

'Do you hear, Mrs. Cameron,' I said, 'what this man, your husband, says? Your lot is indeed sad; but consider how much more terrible it will be if you allow him to work out his villanous scheme, and bring dishonour not on you alone, but on others. Do not be afraid to speak the truth boldly; I will protect you, and see that no harm shall befall you from his baffled rage.'

'Cairnsford, you are mad!' said Cameron, interrupting her, as he raised her head from her hands and turned towards me about to speak. 'You have been deceived by appearances, though how a man of the world like you could have been so deceived I don't know. I have known this lady since she was a child, certainly; indeed, her father on his deathbed commended her to my care, I being the only friend that remained to him; but it is false that she is my wife, as, whatever interest the pitiful circumstances in which she was left may have inspired in me, I could not consent to give up my brilliant

prospects and forego my marriage with Miss Meares, whose fortune after all is only a small part of her attractions. And now, as I have done my best to explain the matter to you, I will not detain you any longer.' He looked towards the door as he finished this speech in his easy impudent manner; but I pretended not to hear him, and turning to the lady, said:

'Mrs. Cameron, have you nothing to say to all this?'

Then she rose and stepped forward a pace or two, looking bewildered like one in a dream. At last with an effort she spoke, and her voice though low was clear, as she said:

'Why do you torture me farther? Have I not told you that whatever Captain Cameron tells you of me you must believe? Was it only to force me to acknowledge my misery that you saved me last night from the waters of the Boodra? You meant well, no doubt, but you have only caused me anguish and shame. Captain Cameron's explanation you must accept as the simple truth, and do not think me ungrateful if I beg that our acquaintance may come to an end from this moment.' As she finished speaking she threw herself once more on the couch, and seemed no longer to be aware of our presence.

Cameron laughed lightly.

'Julia, you see, is a woman of good sense, and she knows she cannot lay claim to the position your knight-errantry would place her in. You understand, Cairnsford, that though I do not intend to quarrel with you this time, I don't like this kind of thing, and must beg you will not repeat it. I do believe that mad fellow Melton put you up to it; it is like his confounded impudence, and I know he is dying to chisel me out of the heiress. However, I won't keep you any longer. Good-bye; I daresay I shall see you to-morrow at A——.'

Disgusted with them both, and above all with myself, I left the house, and mounting Sultan was soon a good way on my return to A——.

BELGRAVIA

JUNE 1875

HOSTAGES TO FORTUNE

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

CHAPTER XXIII.

'But Faustus' offence can ne'er be pardoned; the serpent that tempted Eve may be saved, but not Faustus.'

HOME, a peaceful land smiling in the ripening harvest sunshine. How sweet it is to Editha, returning to her old life, surrounded by the old faces, full of love as in the days that are gone—so utterly gone, so far away even in her memory, that she almost wonders at finding so little change in the familiar scenes and faces of her youth! Not a flower in the garden but blooms as when the garden was her peculiar care; but in herself there is a change as of half a century's experience of life and its bitterness. Not for worlds would she confess, even to herself, that she has been mistaken in her choice or unhappy in her wedded life; but looking back at the last year, from the stand-point of peace and home, she knows that it has been full of care.

She feels that her arrival without Herman is a disappointment and a cause of wonder for everybody at Lochwithian. Ruth says little, careful not to wound, and seems quite satisfied with Editha's excuses for her husband; but the Squire, outspoken and not richly endowed with tact, talks a good deal about his son-in-law's absence, and in a manner that wounds Editha to the quick.

'I never supposed that a daughter of mine would have had to travel two hundred miles with only a chit of a nursemaid to take care of her. If you had told me that your husband couldn't bring you, I'd have come up to London to fetch you.'

'Indeed, dear papa, there was not the least occasion for your doing so. I could travel much farther with nurse and baby without inconvenience.'

'It's lucky for you that you're so strong-minded,' replies the

father grumpily; 'for you've married a man who doesn't seem inclined to give himself much trouble in taking care of you. Things would have been rather different if you had married Vivian Hetheridge—poor young fellow, not married yet, and broken-hearted about you, every one says.'

'O, papa, I saw him last Christmas, and he had grown ever so stout, and looked wonderfully well.'

'A man may gain weight in spite of his broken heart. If Hetheridge had got over your treatment of him he'd have married before now. A man with such an estate as his is bound to marry. Ah, how nice it would have been to have you within a ten-mile ride of us!'

'Come, papa, I think you have quite enough of me, taking my half-yearly visits into consideration. See how serious you've made baby look. He is wondering what you are talking about.'

The Squire, who has had too many grandchildren to consider the relationship a privilege, pokes his finger into the infant's chubby neck, and chirrups inanely.

Wherever Editha goes, whomsoever she sees, she has to answer the same inquiries about her absent husband. Her marriage with the popular young writer has been regarded as a small romance in its way, a love-match pure and simple, and people expect to see husband and wife inseparable, an idyllic pair of lovers unspoiled by matrimony. Thus every one is disappointed, and regards Herman's non-appearance as a kind of defection. Mr. Petherick shakes his head and frowns gravely.

'Hard at work at a new play, is he? You shouldn't let him work so hard—wear out his brain, exhaust his constitution; make him old before his time,' he says seriously.

'Indeed, dear Mr. Petherick, I have been most anxious that he should take more rest; but he is in such a hurry to make a fortune for baby.'

'Fortunes are never made in a hurry, my dear. It is the tortoise who gets rich, not the hare.'

'Then I fear Herman will never be rich. There is nothing of the plodder in his nature.'

'So much the worse for both of you,' retorts Mr. Petherick. 'Show me the man who can plod, and I'll show you the man who will succeed. Your lively geniuses, who make a premature success and end in failure, pretend to associate patient industry with dulness; but that idea is only one of those self-sustaining delusions with which idlers console themselves.'

'His worst enemy could not accuse Herman of idleness,' replies Editha. 'I doubt if Mr. Shynebarr, the Queen's Counsel, works harder.'

'Does he work with method?' interrogates the Incumbent signi-



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J. R. Battershell

MRS. WESTRAY'S NURSE EXHIBITS THE BABY

ntly; and to this question Mrs. Westray is slow to reply, for her husband's literary labour has of late grown more and more fitful and disorderly. He has written for ten hours at a stretch one day, and abandoned his desk altogether on the next, at the call of some one of those various excuses for waste of time which the world misnames leisure. He has worked from midnight till morning, and has spent the following day stretched on a sofa reading a French novel, in the stage of lassitude. He has deserted his study for a week, and then flung himself up there for days and nights in succession, like Balzac, writing as if driven by Furies; the ultimate result of these spasmodic efforts being a less amount of work done than in the calm first year of his married life, when he spent his mornings from eleven till two, and his evenings from nine till eleven, in the domestic retirement of the garden, Editha working or reading by fireside or window. Latterly he has been only able to write when alone. The watchful eyes of the household have disconcerted him.

Even Mrs. Gredby has something to say about the absent husband when Editha goes to see her. Mrs. Westray drives to the White Inn in a basket pony-carriage with nurse and baby, which her small individual has to be introduced to every hill and valley, brook and rivulet, wood and meadow, familiar to his mother's girlhood.

'And where's the young gentleman from London?' asks Mrs. Gredby when she has done admiring the baby, whom she regards as an infant prodigy, and who curiously enough shows himself most favourably disposed both to Mrs. Gredby and Mrs. Gredby's old gentleman in the chimney-corner—an infant who has met the dandies of the county families with contumely. 'And why didn't you drive over from the Priory with you this fine morning?'

Editha explains.

'I should have thought that people could write books anywheres,' remarks Mrs. Gredby, 'purvided they'd a bottle of ink, a penn'orth of steel nibs, and a quire of letter-paper. It do seem hard for you to be down here without your husband. Such a loving couple as you looked, too, that day you brought him to see me. But, to be sure, that was before you was married. I haven't worn my Paisley shawl but once since your wedding-day, Miss Editha, and that was Glanryddyth Eisteddfod last July. And there sits my old gentleman; no change in him, is there? He's looked ready for his coffin the last ten years; but except rheumatics in every joint, there's much the matter with him.'

This cheering statement being repeated in a louder key, the old gentleman nods assent thereto blithely.

'No, there ain't much amiss with me except rheumatics,' he says. 'Lord forbid I should repine against Providence; but if we can't be made with so many joints, it seems a little hard upon us

that we don't get a larger supply of ile to keep 'em going. But we've all got our burdens. My father had a hassmer, and that were a deal worse; his pore old lungs were that weak as he couldn't reach up to the shelf for his pipe without panting as if he were a-goin' to choke. I haven't had much use in my limbs the last two winters, but my lungs is sound, and I can enjoy my bit o' bacry. The missus is hearty enough; though she's a-growing the box for her grave in our back garding.'

'How do I know that anybody else would take the trouble to grow it for me?' remarks Mrs. Gredby briskly; 'there's nothing like looking arter your own affairs if you want 'em attended to. I shall be under no compliment to neighbours for the box coffin a-top o' my grave, and the thought of that will be a comfort to me as I lie in it,' adds the independent-minded mistress of the New Inn.

There is one change which Editha perceives at Lochwithian, and it is one that pierces her heart, for it is a change for the worse in Ruth. The beautiful face is more delicate, more ethereal than when Editha saw it six months ago. The white hand is more transparent in its ivory pallor. The dark eyes are larger and more lustrous. This chrysalis of mortality perishes and shrinks as that butterfly, the immortal spirit, expands its heavenward-soaring wings. To those who read aright, Ruth wears the stamp of a creature in process of translation from the earthly to the spiritual.

Yet never has the invalid been more cheerful, more hopeful about herself. She suffers less than of old, reads much, talks much at times, and with delightful animation. Her joy in Editha's presence is unbounded; her only subject of regret is the weakness which renders her long-promised journey to London impossible just now.

'I should so love to see your house, darling,' she says, when the sisters are alone together in the summer dusk, hand clasped in hand, Editha on a low chair by Ruth's pillow. 'I begin to wonder if I shall ever see it. Last year Dr. Davies said next year, and now this summer it is next year still. Well, even next year will come at last, I suppose, and I shall see my pet in her own home, the cleverest of housekeepers.'

'I don't know about clever housekeeping,' Editha answers ruefully. 'We spend a great deal of money, and I can't quite make out how it goes. Of course everything is very dear, as cook says, and Herman is particular about his dinners, and likes game and fish directly it comes in season. We gave three-and-sixpence a pound for salmon ever so many times in the spring, and as cook fries white-bait very nicely, I ordered a pint for Herman two or three times a week in the season. But even allowing for small extravagances of that kind, I think our housekeeping costs more than it ought.'

Hereupon follows a lengthy and confidential conversation, in which Editha gives Ruth various details of domestic economy, or

domestic extravagance. Ruth is shocked at hearing the cost of that small ménage at Fulham, and suggests dishonesty on the part of Mrs. Files. Beer, grocery, butcher's meat, everything costs about double what it ought, as Ruth demonstrates to her sister by a rough-and-ready comparison between the Fulham and Lochwithian bills—therefore Mr. and Mrs. Westray are being cheated.

'It is very dreadful to suspect any one,' says Editha, discomposed by this suggestion.

'It is still worse to encourage dishonesty by wilfully shutting one's eyes to it. Let me find you a young woman who can cook—one of your old pupils, perhaps—and take her back with you.'

'Do you think we could find one who would cook well enough for Herman?' inquires Editha doubtfully.

'Why not? I should not engage an inexperienced person, but I would make it my business to find a woman of unimpeachable character.'

'I had an excellent character with Ann Files,' remarks Editha.

'Had you any character of the person who gave the character?'

'Of course not. The lady was quite a stranger to me.'

'And she wanted to get rid of a bad servant without what people call "unpleasantness." I daresay that's how it was. Let me get you a cook, darling, and if she does not fry whitebait as well as this Ann Files, depend upon it she will reduce your housekeeping expenses by nearly half.'

'That would be indeed a comfort. It sometimes makes me quite unhappy to think how hard Herman has to work to pay for things that are thrown on the dust-heap—broken china, half-burned coals, and so on. And yet I am always begging Files to be economical, and she assures me that it goes to her heart to waste anything; but the things do get wasted somehow.'

'The cook I get you will not be wasteful, dear. I am so glad we have had this little talk, and that I can be useful to you in some small way.'

Editha is grateful, but is sorely exercised by the thought that Mrs. Files is possibly not so honest as she might be. The idea of having been plundered largely for the last two years; of retrospective wastefulness which might have been avoided had she, Editha, been more careful; the idea of Herman's genius having been compelled to do task-work in order that Ann Files might squander the fruits thereof,—notions such as these present themselves to the young wife's mind in a very painful manner, and she is thoughtful and unhappy for the rest of the evening.

Ruth and Mrs. Jones, the good old Lochwithian housekeeper, hold a consultation next morning, at which Editha is present. Mrs. Jones knows the history of all the young women within ten miles of the Priory, and can lay her hands on a culinary treasure forthwith

Betsy Evans—not Evans the grocer's daughter, nor Evans the butcher's, nor Evans at the Hill Farm, nor Evans who keeps the Prince Albert Inn—but another Evans who cobbles. Betsy has been a pupil of Editha's, and has since graduated as kitchen-maid under Mrs. Davis at Llanmoel Manor-house.

'Are not kitchen-maids in large houses apt to learn wasteful ways?' inquires Editha, with a vivid recollection of Jane Tubbs, who had budded as a kitchen-maid in Belgrave-square to blossom as a cook at Fulham, and who was in the habit of bringing forward 'the square' as a precedent for every extravagance, such as the expenditure of a pound of lard for the frying of a single sole, or the investment of two pounds of gravy-beef in a small boat of gravy, which would have been flavourless without Worcester sauce.

'Wasteful!' exclaims Mrs. Jones, horrified. 'Wastefulness was never learned at Llanmoel Manor. Mrs. Davis is a woman who couldn't rest quiet in her bed at night if she thought she had wasted so much as the bread-crumbs off the table-cloth. Her poultry is the finest in Radnorshire.'

It is agreed that Betsy Evans shall be engaged to accompany Mrs. Westray to London, upon whose return to Fulham Mrs. Files is to be dismissed with a month's wages. Mrs. Files will of course be angry and remonstrant at this uncourteous treatment; but if she has been as dishonest as Ruth believes, she is not entitled to much courtesy. Editha is delighted at the idea of keeping house with less money, and sparing her dear Herman in some manner.

'It has gone to my heart to ask him for money so often, knowing how hard he has to work for it,' she says sadly; for she feels that the last year of her wedded life might have been happier but for that strain upon her husband's invention, which has made him at once absent-minded, irritable, and moody by the domestic hearth, and eager for the relief of lively society abroad.

Baby, otherwise George Edward, by which names he has been christened, after his two grandfathers, flourishes marvellously in the clear Welsh air, fresh, life-giving, as it blows over the hill-side sheep-walks, the ferny dells and pine-groves. To see the chubby yearling grow rosy and strong, or to hear his happy voice—shrill and loud—as he crawls or rolls upon the short sweet turf, is a joy for Editha, and to be with Ruth a still deeper delight. Yet this first separation from Herman is a sharper trial than the young wife could have foreseen. Her life is snapped asunder, and the larger half of heart and mind are with her husband. Her health improves in her native air, in the divine repose of a country life; but, even seated by Ruth's couch, her thoughts are with Herman in his study. She sees him careworn and anxious, fretful and excited, writing for bread.

'How I wish he loved the country as I do, Ruth!' she exclaims

one day, breaking off from the previous subject of conversation to talk of her husband. 'He' always means Herman in Editha's discourse. 'We should be rich then, with my poor little income and the earnings of one novel a year. No need for him to write plays, or worry himself about dramatic critics. I was thinking to-day, as I looked at that pretty house just under the brow of the hill on the Llandrysak road, what a happy home it might be for Herman and me—such a dear old house and garden, all going to rack and ruin for want of a tenant. How cheaply we might live there—no carriages, no dinner-parties, no expensive amusements, but just the simplest easiest life, such as one can fancy Wordsworth and Southey leading in the Lake country!'

'It would be very nice, darling, if it were possible,' replies Ruth; 'it would make my life more happy than words can tell to have you always near me. And surely Herman would write better face to face with nature.'

Editha shakes her head despondently.

'I have told him so sometimes,' she says; 'but he asks me if Samuel Johnson wrote face to face with nature, or Charles Lamb, or Thackeray, or Dickens. I reminded him once that all our greatest poets have lived remote from cities, at which he laughed and said, "There's a trifling exception to your rule in the person of one William Shakespeare, whose works were for the most part produced in the neighbourhood of Blackfriars, as the dramatic exigences of the Globe Theatre demanded. Ben Jonson, Marlow, Dryden, and a few others were also denizens of the streets." And then he tells me that he is not a poet, but a painter of manners and a recorder of events, and that he must live where men abound and events follow one another quickly.'

'I should have thought that for a man who had seen the world and mingled largely with his fellow-men the repose of a country life would be most of all conducive to thought and invention,' replies Ruth. 'Memory, undisturbed by the distractions of to-day, would reproduce the images and impressions of the past; all that a man had seen, suffered, and felt would appear before him distinctly, as in a picture which he need only copy. I can hardly imagine any man writing a great book amidst the distractions of London society.'

Herman's letters are frequent, but brief and hurried. He writes in a cheerful spirit, however, and begs his wife to be happy, and to obtain all the good she can for herself and baby from the healthful repose of home. 'You were looking worn and harassed when you left me, dearest,' he writes, with all his old tenderness. 'I shall expect to see you return with the roses I admired so much in the young lady who gave the chief prize at the Eisteddfod.'

Editha has been at home nearly a fortnight, and has quite forgotten Mr. Lyndhurst's intention of trying the healing waters of

Llandrysak, nothing having yet occurred to remind her of that gentleman's existence. It is a sultry August afternoon—a day on which the world seems to have fallen asleep in the sunshine, and even that sleepy hollow, Lochwithian, is a shade more slumberous than usual. The waters of the Pennant have shrunk to a thread of silver, and trickle gently over those crags adown which they are wont to tumble furiously with the brawl of a small cataract. It is Saturday afternoon, too, and everybody's work seems to be done except Editha's. She and an under-gardener go down to the church together, laden with stephanotis and ferns for the decoration of altar and chancel, reading-desk and font; not that to-morrow is any especial Sunday in the ecclesiastical calendar, but rather because the flowers are in their August prime, and Editha deems their fittest use is in the adornment of her beloved church.

She takes the basket of flowers from the gardener in the porch, dismisses him, and goes in alone. The door of this house of prayer is left open for the most part, Mr. Petherick having a notion that a tired labourer returning from his daily toil may like now and then to enter that shadowy temple and kneel for a little while before the sculptured altar, whose Christian emblems no bishop has yet condemned.

Editha pauses on the threshold, surprised, delighted by the sound of the organ, touched as she has never heard it touched before. Some one, a stranger, is playing Mendelssohn's 'I waited for the Lord,' and the instrument she knows so well is breathing forth tones of sweetness and power that move her almost to tears.

Who can the player be beneath whose skilful hands the organ speaks a new language? Some tourist, no doubt. An occasional tourist, archæologically-minded, finds his way to Lochwithian in the course of a summer, to grope and pry among the foundations of the Priory, and come to arbitrary conclusions about the history thereof.

Mrs. Westray moves softly about her work, listening to the player. He glides from Mendelssohn into the 'Agnus Dei' in Mozart's First Mass in C. The organ, a small one, is on one side of the chancel, screened by purple-silk curtains. Editha is very near the player as she builds a bank of flowers upon the reading-desk, pleased to think of Mr. Petherick's delight to-morrow when he sees her work.

The last notes of the 'Agnus Dei' fade into silence, the invisible stranger strikes a chord, and a deep full voice begins to sing the Latin version of Editha's favourite hymn, 'Rock of Ages.' The voice is Hamilton Lyndhurst's, and she wonders at herself for not having recognised the touch of the musician. No doubt it is because she has never heard him play the organ before.

She goes on with her work noiselessly while he sings. She is wreathing one of the candelabra with stephanotis and long sprays of maiden-hair as Mr. Lyndhurst appears from behind the curtains, and

his coming discomposes her no more than if he were the purblind little organist she has known from her childhood. He has quite enough penetration to see this, and is not flattered by the fact. It is new to him to meet a woman to whom his presence is a matter of indifference, and this woman is one upon whom he has bestowed more earnest thought than he has given to the rest of her sex in the aggregate.

He has heard her enter the church, watched her through a chink in the curtains, and has played and sung for her edification.

'How do you like our organ, Mr. Lyndhurst?' she asks as they shake hands.

'Not at all bad for such a small one. I came to Lochwithian with the idea of calling at the Priory, but seeing the church door open strayed in to look at it, and could not resist trying the organ. Fortunate for me, as I can now enter the Priory under your wing.'

'Papa will be very pleased to see you. Have you been long in Wales?'

'I came only yesterday.'

'Indeed! Then you have seen Herman, perhaps, this week?' she says eagerly, delightedly, as if to have seen Herman was to belong to a privileged order of beings.

'How the simpleton loves him!' thinks Lyndhurst, upon whom this single-hearted, all-absorbing affection has no more influence than the plaintive bleating of the foredoomed calf upon its executioner the butcher. He has made up his mind that this one woman can make him happy—can bend the straggling line of his life into a perfect circle, can harmonise an existence which is now chaotic; and with what dishonour he may stain his manhood, what anguish he may inflict ere he reach his aim, is a calculation that has no place in his thoughts.

'Did you see him?' She repeats her question eagerly, wondering at that troubled look which clouds Mr. Lyndhurst's face for a moment.

'Yes; he dined at Mrs. Brandreth's last Sunday. A delightful little dinner. Just seven people, and, with the exception of your humble servant, all distinguished; the kind of society Westray enjoys so thoroughly.'

'Yes,' sighs Editha, 'he is very fond of clever people. Did you think him looking ill—overworked?'

'On the contrary, he was in high spirits, and looked, as I thought, better than usual—younger, brighter, more like the young fellow I remember seven years ago, fresh from Balliol, and full of enthusiasm and belief in the perfectability of human nature. I daresay if I had seen him next morning in his study I should have found a difference. It is the reaction that tells. We did not leave Mrs. Brandreth till the small hours. Rather too bad for a quiet

little dinner, wasn't it? So many people dropped in during the evening, and every one had so much to say.'

'I wonder Mrs. Brandreth can support the fatigue of those Sunday evenings, after acting six nights a week.'

'Do you? That shows how little you know her. She is a creature who lives upon excitement, as a Malay upon opium. Give her leisure for thought, and she would die in a year.'

'Are her thoughts so bitter that she could not bear them?'

They have come out into the little garden-like churchyard, and linger, Mr. Lyndhurst looking rather absently at the tombstones as he talks.

'I think she has had her disappointments—perhaps I ought rather to say disappointment; for you know in my creed intense feeling comes but once in a life.'

'She was left a widow so early,' says Editha compassionately.

'Ye-es,' drawls Lyndhurst; 'but I doubt if the loss of Captain Brandreth sits very heavily on her spirit.'

'Was he not a good man?'

'Good? Not in the church-going sense, I fear; but he was thoroughly harmless. A well-meaning young man, who carried a bull-terrier in his coat-pocket and gave his mind to billiards. He was of a good family, and had expectations. Myra Clitheroe married the expectations, which were nipped untimely by his death. I dare say that notion worries her a little.'

Editha looks grave. She and Myra have never fraternised, and she likes her less after this hasty sketch of Mr. Lyndhurst's.

'I am glad you thought him looking well,' she remarks, recurring to Herman.

'Poets always look well by lamplight. Have you seen his verses in the new weekly journal, the *Connoisseur*?'

'Verses? No, indeed. He so seldom writes poetry, though he is by nature a poet. Is there a poem of his in the *Connoisseur*? And he has not sent it to me! How cruel!'

'Perhaps he thinks it a little out of your line. The *Connoisseur* people wanted him to do something for their first number, so he dashed off half-a-dozen verses; and the little *tour de force* has made quite a hit. Every one was talking of it at Brandreth's the other night.'

'And I have not seen it!' says Editha, chagrined.

'Old story of the shoemaker's wife, you know. I can bring you the paper to-morrow, or send my groom over with it to-night, if you'd really like to see it.'

'I shall be so much obliged. What is the name of the poem?'

'"Ananke." The word Claude Frolo cut upon the wall of his cell, you know, which in plain English means Fate. The title in

Greek characters looks rather *chic*, I assure you. De Musset never did anything better than the poem. The *Connoisseur* is going in for that kind of thing—abuses everybody, hits out from the shoulder right and left, and promises to be a success. I hear there are two junctions and three actions for libel against the proprietors already; but as the shareholders include two of our wealthiest noblemen and a great City swell, that kind of thing won't balk them. I have pledged myself to support the paper to the extent of a few thousands.'

Editha's interest in the *Connoisseur* is bounded by that one column which contains her husband's verses. Mr. Lyndhurst perceives this, and does not pursue the subject. They pass from the churchyard to the shrubbery, and take the winding path to the house. It is nearly time for afternoon tea in Ruth's room, and Editha means to offer Mr. Lyndhurst that innocent repast. They ascend the shrubberied slope side by side in friendly converse. It is like Red Ridinghood showing the wolf the way to her grandam's cottage.

'What do you think of Westray's continental expedition?' Lyndhurst inquires presently.

'Continental expedition! I don't know what you mean,' falters Editha, with an alarmed look.

'Perhaps I oughtn't to have mentioned it. After all, it may be only an idea. But I thought he would have told you all about it.'

'About what?'

'The proprietors of his old paper, the *Day Star*, want him to be as special war-correspondent for this Franco-Prussian scrimmage. The man who has been doing the work has knocked under, and come home invalided. They offer Westray splendid terms, and he seems to think the thing would suit him—the variety and excitement freshen his brains, and so on. I daresay he feels himself a little used up after the pace he has been going—in literature, I mean—for the last two years.'

This remark comes like a stab. The last two years are his married life. It is for her sake, for the maintenance of that expensive ill-managed home, he has squandered the wealth of his brain, wasted his genius on recklessly rapid composition. The delicate powers of his fancy have been forced to premature growth, and their life has gone to fill Ann Filer's grease-pot.

This bitter thought gives way before the appalling ideas conjured by that word 'war-correspondent.' A man who writes history from the cannon's mouth, amidst a hailstorm of shrapnel and grape, with murderous shells tearing up the earth round about him, with smoke-made chasms yawning before his feet, and the smoke-darkened air rent with the groans of the dying.

'He would never think—he could not be so cruel!' she gasps.
'He would not hazard the life that is so dear—'

'Hazard, my dear Mrs. Westray! He would be in no more danger among the belligerents than in the retirement of his own study. You never heard of a special correspondent coming to any harm. They talk very big, and to read their letters one would suppose they rode shoulder to shoulder with the commanding officer: but it's my belief they sit quietly by a wood fire in some roadside inn near the scene of operations, and get their information hot and hot from small boys. Your small boy would go up to the cannon's mouth and look into it for sixpence. I shall be angry with myself if I have given you the slightest alarm. After all, Westray may have no idea of accepting the *Day Star* people's offer. All I know is, that the offer was made, and talked about at Mrs. Brandreth's. But no doubt he has refused it, or he would have told you.'

'Yes,' Editha says, slowly recovering composure; 'he would have told me. He never kept a secret from me in his life.'

'Ah, that's what all wives say,' thinks Lyndhurst; 'but I fancy I could tell you something about him that would astonish you for all that.'

He has given her an uncomfortable unsettled feeling about her absent husband, and that for the moment is enough; so he changes the subject, talks of the scenery, admires Priory and garden. Editha has forgotten her idea of offering him tea till he reminds her of her promise to introduce him to her sister.

'Miss Morcombe is fond of music, you told me?' he says.

'Passionately; and she hears so little good music. I shall be very pleased if you will play to her. There is a harmonium in her room—the best papa could get for her. Herr Louis Engel chose it. Will you come to Ruth's room and have some tea?'

'I shall be charmed.'

They go in together, and Ruth looks up from Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living*—she is a lover of the old divine, whose quaintness and classic lore have a curious charm for her—astonished at the appearance of a tall and handsome stranger.

'Mr. Lyndhurst, my sister. You have heard me talk of Mr. Lyndhurst, Ruth, one of Herman's old friends.'

The tea-table is ready. Editha takes off her hat, and seats herself before the old-fashioned silver urn, just as in the old days when Herman first came to the Priory. Something of the glow and freshness of untroubled youth has faded from her face since that happy time, but the face has gained in dignity and beauty. To Lyndhurst it looks like the face of a queen.

'My queen, at any rate,' he says to himself; 'my lady, whom to love is honour.'

He takes his place at her side presently—Herman's old place—

and performs the small services of the tea-table, addressing his conversation chiefly to Ruth, whom he is desirous to conciliate. They would seem to have not an idea in common, this invalid recluse and the sin-dyed man of the world. Yet they get on wonderfully well. Ruth's book, in its old-fashioned tree-calf binding, has slipped from the silken coverlet at her knee to the carpet. Lyndhurst picks it up, glances at the title as he returns it, and begins to talk about the learned Jeremy, whose pages he knows as well as those of Balzac or Dumas fils, Feydeau or Flaubert, Heine or Spielhagen. A great reader Mr. Lyndhurst, in those midday hours which he gives to the repose of his body, and in the small hours sometimes, when he has made the idle experiment of going to bed soon after midnight. He has a shelf of his favourite books and a reading-lamp at the head of his bed, and takes down a volume of Heine or De Musset and reads himself into dreamland, when a man less careful of his own well-being would take a dose of chloral.

Mr. Lyndhurst sips his tea with an air of quiet enjoyment that bespeaks a placid soul refreshed by this pure and gentle society. It is strange how much he relishes the novelty of the situation. Mephistopheles drinking tea with Margaret and her mother could not be more out of place, could not carry the situation with a more consummate tact. After tea he goes to the harmonium at Editha's request, and plays Beethoven's Symphony in C minor, and then the 'Eroica,' and after that the 'Pastorale.' His listeners cannot have too much of that magnificent music. The harmonium peals out full organ notes, ripe and round, and fills the room with melody—melody which overflows into the corridor, where the Squire hears it on his way to that study or den where he goes into the mystery of accounts with his bailiff.

He looks in at the door, asking, 'Who have you got there, Ruth?' and thereupon renews his acquaintance with Hamilton Lyndhurst.

'I thought there was too much noise for our little organist,' says Mr. Morcombe blandly. 'And so you have come down to try our sulphur or saline. Wonderful good they do you Londoners, I believe. Which are you taking—saline or sulphur?'

This is one of the conventional inquiries at Llandrysak. Mr. Lyndhurst looks embarrassed.

'My medical man advised sulphur,' he replies, with a lurking sparkle in those dark eyes of his, 'perhaps on the doctrine of signatures.'

'You must stop and dine with us, of course. How did you come over?'

'I rode.'

'And you've put up your horse at the village inn? Why didn't you bring him here? He'd have been better taken care of.'

'No doubt. The village stable is certainly rather primitive, but I saw the corn put into his manger, and left him happy. I shall be too delighted to stop if I am not in the way.'

'In the way! We live so far out of the way that a visit from an intelligent stranger is the greatest luxury we can enjoy. How about this Ministry now? Will Gladstone bring in his bill next session, or retire upon his defeat, eh?' And the Squire begins to talk politics lustily, and speedily carries off his guest to see the gardens and the home-farm, but not before Lyndhurst has promised to come up to Ruth's room after dinner, and play Mozart or Mendelssohn. He contrives to make himself agreeable to the Squire during that inspection of the premises; surveys the stables, which are Mr. Morcombe's especial pride, inspects all the horses, and pronounces on their various merits with an acumen which establishes him in their owner's good graces. No man can make a stronger or better impression in a given time than Hamilton Lyndhurst.

Mr. Petherick dines with them, and after dinner they all go up to Ruth's room to take coffee and hear Mr. Lyndhurst play. It is quite a pleasant evening: the softly-lighted room; the two women, one a pale and fragile copy of the other's beauty, or say, rather, one a drawing in crayons, the other a painting in oils; the quaint old furniture and china harmoniously arranged, nothing crowded or ill assorted,—make altogether a charming picture. It is ages since Hamilton Lyndhurst has felt himself the inmate of a home; and this is home; curiously different from the houses he visits in London, which have the air of being public places of entertainment, minus the moneytaker at the doors, and sometimes minus the amusement.

He leaves regretfully at the stroke of ten, and rides away in the clear summer moonlight, feeling as if he had been in Paradise. Unhappily the rose-hued light of an earthly Eden is too mild a fire to purify a sin-steeped soul like his, and he rides back to Llandrysak calmly meditative of evil, the solemn hills looking down at him, distant worlds shining upon him, the mystery of the universe around and about him, and affecting him no more deeply than it does the field-mouse, whose sharp beady eyes look warily out of its hole under the hedge yonder.

CHAPTER XXIV.

'No settled senses of the world can match
The pleasure of that madness.'

MR. LYNDHURST'S groom rides over to Lochwithian before breakfast next morning, and Editha finds the first number of the *Connoisseur* beside her plate on the breakfast-table, packed in an

cial-looking vellum envelope, and sealed with Lyndhurst's monogram. He pretends to no ancient lineage, confesses frankly that his grandfather sold oranges in Houndsditch, and is above the petty desire of a purchased coat-of-arms.

Editha opens the packet with eager hands. The *Connoisseur* is a journal of gentlemanly aspect, printed on thick creamy-hued paper, in fair readable type, largely spaced, and with wide columns. Its style is the predominant characteristic of the new periodical. It speaks roundly, is outspoken, insolent even, but not snobbish or petty. It has a good-natured arrogance, a soldierly freedom of speech, and that delightful modern scepticism which may fairly be called unbelief in everything.

Editha turns with a glowing cheek to the poem 'ΑΝΑΓΚΗ, which occupies a place of honour in the middle of the paper; but her blush of wifely pride pales as she reads, and before she has finished the poem, she rises from the table to hide the tears of wounded feeling.

The verses are the complaint of a soul ill at ease; weariness, disappointment, unbelief, are expressed in every line. No happy husband, no Christian gentleman, could have thought these thoughts written these words, Mrs. Westray tells herself. They are verses eminently calculated to take the town; for they breathe just the spirit of disappointment in the past and indifference about the future which is the dominant note of town life.

Editha looks at the signature through blinding tears. Yes, it is his name; he boldly signs this confession of no-faith. She has known him two years, and knows him so little that these verses strike upon her like a revelation. Her love, her devotion, her untroubled thoughts of him and care for him, have been unsufficing for her happiness. He writes of himself as a disappointed man; a man for whom life and love have alike been failures. He writes of Fate to Herman's future like an infidel.

Could she but know exactly the truth about this unlucky little man, which has cost her bitter tears, and brought her husband a pound cheque, she would know that the verses were dashed off after a disagreeable interview with Mr. Standish the publisher, in which that gentleman complained of the result of Herman's last play, and offered two hundred and fifty less for his next; she would know that Herman's spirit had been furthermore disturbed by a harsh criticism of his last play in the *Censor*, where he found himself stigmatised as the latest perverter of dramatic taste and violator of public morals, to say nothing of being condemned as an amateur, unacquainted with his own language, and unprovided with a dictionary.

Thus lashed to fury, his Muse had raised her crest somewhere in the small hours, shaken her tresses savagely, like another Medusa,

and hit out against Fate: Fate meaning at this moment a decline of two hundred and fifty pounds in the market price of a three-volume novel and the small carplings of an anonymous critic.

Unhappily Editha takes the matter in sober seriousness, weighs every word, ponders every latent meaning, and is miserable. She locks up the paper as if it were a guilty secret. Not for worlds would she have those dreadful verses read by Ruth. She writes to her husband in the hour between breakfast and church time; a long piteous letter, telling him how shocked and grieved she has been by sentiments which seem to her like a new language from his pen, asking him about the *Day Star's* offer, and if he had ever been so cruel as to think for one moment of going to the scene of war; and finally imploring him to come down to Lochwithian, if it were only for a few days' rest for himself, or for that much lesser reason—only to make her happy.

'You thought very little of coming backwards and forwards when we were engaged,' she adds, with gentle reproachfulness. 'Have I less claim upon you now I am your wife, and when our child is just old enough to ask in his baby-language why you are not here?'

She is not a little surprised to see Mr. Lyndhurst stroll into the garden an hour after luncheon on this summer Sunday. She is carrying her boy round to look at the roses, which he examines critically with big round blue eyes, and sniffs daintily with a small 'tip-tilted' nose. She had not heard the Squire's hospitable invitation to his new acquaintance last night, and had no idea that Mr. Lyndhurst was to eat his Sabbath dinner at the Priory.

'I hope you won't think me a tremendous nuisance, Mrs. Westray,' he says apologetically. 'Your father was good enough to ask me to drive over this afternoon, and I could not refuse such a tempting offer. Llandrysak on Sunday is the abomination of desolation. The bell of the little Anglican church sounds like the stroke of a toasting-fork upon a frying-pan; the Independent chapel tinkles and jangles all the morning. The Independents begin to howl hymns at ten; the Anglicans intone at half-past. You can hear both melodious sounds far away across the common in the silence of the place. When Slingsby Edwards has finished his sermon, his flock troops off to the Anglicans to make a finish. Shows a mind unfettered by theological prejudice, doesn't it?'

Editha's grave looks reprove this jesting with sacred things; so Mr. Lyndhurst turns his attention to the baby. Praise a woman's child, or horse, or dog, and you find the surest short cut to her favour. The child inclines to Hamilton at once, as four-footed animals incline to him, perhaps because he is big, powerful, and debonnaire, and has a surface benignity which attracts unreasoning creatures.

The Squire appears presently, returning from his farm, in a

straw hat, and with a Sunday-afternoon listlessness of gait and manner; and they all wander about the gardens, and down through the orchard to the ruins, Mr. Lyndhurst carrying the baby on his shoulder, and feeling himself quite a domestic character. They dawdle about, looking at the solid old stone walls, threaded with pale spleenwort and gray mosses, and speculating upon the plan of nave and aisles, transept and apse, sacristy and lady chapel. They stroll down to the river—that placid trout stream which was wont to flow through the Priory kitchen. There bloom the forget-me-nots, which Herman and Editha plucked together three years ago in the untroubled morning of their love. How well she remembers that day and the new dreams it brought her, the faint vague hopes which she tried to shut out of her mind, fearing a new influence which might come between her and Ruth! Now, Ruth is only second in her life, tenderly beloved still, but never again the first.

'I might have been happier if I had been true to Ruth,' she thinks sadly, as her father and Mr. Lyndhurst stroll on a little in advance of her, talking politics, the baby deliciously content with his lofty perch, looking down at his mother as she slowly follows, full of thought.

If she had been true to Ruth, if she had made up her mind at once and for ever to remain unmarried for love of Ruth, how much care, how many a pain she might have missed! It would have been a hard thing to refuse that ardent lover, a hard thing to reject the sweet responsibility of wifehood; but once the sacrifice made, how easy all the rest of life! How simple, how single her duty as Ruth's nurse and consoler! how complicated, how difficult as Herman's wife! He has committed to her the custody of his days, the guardianship of his fame; and how little she has done for either! She has trebled the cost of his existence, and has not succeeded in making his home happy, since he goes elsewhere in search of amusement. Upon his art she has exercised no influence whatever, since the last page he has published proves that in thought and opinion they two, husband and wife, are wide as the poles asunder. Her reverence for things that are holy, her deep and servent faith, have had no more effect upon his way of looking at life than if he had spent the last two years of his existence among South-Sea Islanders.

They dine at six, and when the Squire and his guest return to the drawing-room, Editha has gone to church; whereby Mr. Lyndhurst finds the next two hours hang somewhat heavily on hand. Mr. Morcombe has shown him the stables and the home-farm. He has seen the ruins—the garden. There is really nothing more for him to see at Lochwithian, except the inexhaustible hills. The Squire's conversation waxes monotonous. They go out into the garden, and smoke their cigars amidst the odours of roses and jasmine. Lynd-

hurst looks at the church-window, whence shines the faint gleam of the pulpit-candles, and wonders how much longer the service is to last. Anon comes the sound of the organ, village voices singing an evening hymn, and then the little congregation comes slowly out of the gray gothic porch, and presently Mr. Lyndhurst hears the click of the garden-gate, which announces Editha's return. She must pass them on her way to the house.

'Good-night, papa,' she says. 'I am going to Ruth's room, and I don't think I shall come down-stairs again to-night unless you want me. Good-night, Mr. Lyndhurst.'

'Out of sorts, pet?' asks the Squire, scrutinising her after his good-night kiss. 'You are looking pale. No bad news from Westray, is there?'

'No, papa; I've a headache, that's all.'

'Thunder in the air, no doubt. Good-night, dear; go and rest.'

And so, after a friendly good-night to Mr. Lyndhurst, Editha leaves them, and the Squire and his guest go down to the gate to waylay Parson Petherick, who comes in to smoke a cigar with them after his day's long labour.

That unhappy look of Editha's haunts Hamilton Lyndhurst as he drives back to Llandrysak.

'She has begun to doubt him,' he thinks. 'That sceptical poem has made her miserable. If she is so wretched because he has shown himself something less holy than the saint she has made him, what will she suffer when she knows more? When she knows that the moth has flown back to the flame that lured him years ago, and that his wings are singed by the old fire?'

CHAPTER XXV.

'For men at most differ as Heaven and earth,
But women, worst and best, as Heaven and Hell.'

TUESDAY morning brings Herman's answer to his wife's letter. It is brief, but in some measure reassuring. He makes light of her anxieties; he ridicules her fears.

'First, as for the *Day Star*, dearest,' he writes, after a few affectionate commonplaces, 'such an offer as you speak of has been made, and is, I freely confess, a tempting offer. So complete a change of scene, the life and movement of the thing, would, I believe, refresh and stimulate me. I have been growing dismally stagnant of late, and find, as you have yourself observed, the ink flow less freely from my pen than of old. But, inviting as the opportunity is, I feel that, as a family man, I am bound to forego it, and you

never would have heard a syllable about it from me. It was rather officious of Lyndhurst to mention the affair; but these idle men are such inveterate gossips. Be content, dear; I sit in my den at Fulham like a spider in his hole, and spin copy, with an occasional feeling that I am spinning it, like the spider, out of my own internal economy.

'I am sorry you disapprove of the verses. They were struck off in the heat of the moment, and mean very little except that I was tired and depressed when I wrote them. Be happy, dearest; enjoy the simple pleasures of Lochwithian, and come back to me by and by blooming and beautiful as when first I saw your face shining upon me under Dewrance's umbrella at the Eisteddfod.

'The horses are well; the house has a dusty look in your absence. Kiss our pet with a hundred superfluous kisses for me.—Your ever-loving husband,

HERMAN.'

She is comforted by this letter, vague as its assurances are. Poor fellow, he owns to a passing weariness of his art. If he would but give himself rest—surrender his expensive house and servants, sell carriages and horses, and come down here, where they might live so cheaply! Editha explores an empty house in her walk that morning, and longs to furnish it for herself and Herman. It is a rustic dwelling, on the slope of one of the great green hills that look down upon the old Priory—a roomy, comfortable cottage, built by Mr. Petherick's predecessor, and lately occupied by a retired naval man, who made garden and orchard the pride of his life. This old post-captain has been dead some months, and his cherished garden has been neglected while the house waits for a new tenant. It lies a little off the high-road, and is at present eight miles from a railway station; but the view from its windows is one of the finest in this part of the country, and the air is purest other. A year hence there will be a loop line to Lochwithian, and this serie amidst the hills so much the more accessible.

Editha wanders in and out of the empty rooms, while the baby and his nurse sit on the lawn plucking daisies among the long grass. She finds a lovely little room at the side of the house, with a French window and balcony overhanging the valley, a waterfall babbling below, and rough crag and pinewood towering above. Such a study for a poet! Here, surely, inspiration would come as it never could in flat sluggish Fulham. Above these are two airy rooms, which would make the most delightful nurseries for baby. There are just rooms enough for comfort, none to spare for show—a snug little dining-room, suggestive of a *partie carrée* at most; a rustic drawing-room, with a big bow-window.

'How happily we might live here,' muses Editha, 'wasting no money upon dinner-giving or display! We could manage with one

servant even, and I could help to keep the house nice. What pleasure it would be to me to work for Herman—to be really useful to him, instead of being only an occasion of expense as I am now! And how delightful to live close to Ruth and papa! We could go to London sometimes, of course—for Herman to superintend the production of his plays, for instance—but I cannot think that it is necessary for an imaginative writer to live in London.'

The days slip smoothly, gently by at Lochwithian—not altogether happy, for the wife's heart is full of cares for her absent husband, but brightened by many household joys. To be with Ruth, to see her child happy, to meet old friends again, and go back to the sweetness of youth—all this should be enough for happiness, Editha thinks; but her heart yearns for the day when she can reasonably go back to Fulham.

Herman's letters all entreat her to stay—to make the most of home joys, her beloved hills, her old pensioners, and not to hurry back to the murky suburb, which has a dusty, shabby look now the freshness of summer has worn off, Herman tells her.

Hamilton Lyndhurst comes over to Lochwithian two or three times a week, and joins the Squire and his daughter in their rides and drives, contriving to render himself agreeable to both. He cultivates his acquaintance with Ruth, and brightens many an hour for the invalid with his music. In this fortnight of his life he enjoys more domestic happiness than he has known in all his previous existence. The freshness of the sensation makes it strangely sweet to him. This equable life, flowing gently on, without pleasures, without excitements, is something utterly new to him.

The fortnight hurries by like a dream, as it seems to Mr. Lyndhurst, and yet it is the longest fortnight in his life to look back upon—a complete existence in miniature.

'My mind has taken root here,' he tells Ruth, when he pays his farewell visit. 'I feel as if I were a native of these hills, instead of the miserable Cockney I am. I shall fancy myself all adrift again when I return to stony Babylon.'

To stony Babylon he does return, timing his departure cleverly—just two days before Editha's. This looks well, and gives an accidental air to his presence in the neighbourhood of Lochwithian. A less-practised schemer would have lingered to the last, and would have managed to be Editha's escort on the homeward journey. Lyndhurst departs without having awakened anybody's suspicions as to the purity of his intentions—unless, indeed, there lurks some shadow of distrust in the pastor's honest mind.

'I don't quite like that fellow,' says Mr. Petherick, when the Squire has been praising his departed guest. 'He is too smooth. Velvet paws always remind me of cats. He made himself so abominably agreeable to us all; and yet he seemed a fish out of

ter, somehow, in spite of his easy manner and his air of frank enjoyment. He is not the type of man to be so delighted with our innocent countrified pleasures. Nature and he don't harmonise. What kind of person is he in town, Editha?

Mrs. Westray smiles at the question.

'I think he is very much the same man you have seen here—not quite so frank or genial, perhaps. But Herman's friends are always liking criticism, and a man like Mr. Lyndhurst says ill-natured things for the sake of being witty. He takes life very easily, and seems to have no particular purpose in his existence. People call him Midas, and say that all he touches turns to gold; but I doubt if he has much enjoyment of his wealth. He always has rather a red air, as if he had tried all the pleasures of life and found them empty. I never saw him seem so near happiness as he has seemed to be here.'

'Humph!' mutters Mr. Petherick, 'that's rather odd, isn't it? Buttercups and daisies would seem scarcely the fare for that kind of man—unless he had some motive for liking the buttercups and daisies. Perhaps it's the novelty that pleases him. I shouldn't wonder if Nebuchadnezzar enjoyed the grass of the field after the barbaric splendour of his palace. However, I must confess your Mr. Lyndhurst is a problem I can't solve. Does your husband like him?'

'Very much. He is one of our most frequent guests.'

At last the day comes for Editha's return. She has been at the Priory nearly a month, and her presence has done wonders for Ruth—has improved her so much, that Editha forgets the fears which were aroused by her sister's altered looks on her arrival. The sisters spend their last evening together alone, in confidential talk.

'Darling, I look forward to the delight of coming down here to live some day,' Editha says. 'I know that Herman is tired of London, though I cannot induce him to believe that he is. All his pleasures are monotonous, and the life he leads in town is wearing him out. I see it too plainly. We are living expensively, and his brain is being exhausted by the effort to keep pace with our expenditure. If I could persuade him to do without the society of a few people who amuse him, the rest would be easy. He is by nature a student, and I know that he could be as happy as the day is long in Captain Fitzgerald's cottage.'

'He has your health and happiness to consider as well as his own,' replies Ruth; 'and I know how much better you and baby would be in this clear air. I don't think Fulham suits you, dear. You were looking ill and worried when you came.'

'I had been anxious about Herman.'

They talk hopefully of the happy life they might lead if Herman could but consent to forsake clubs and parties, and be satisfied with a bucolic or meditative existence, remote from the stir and thrill of

Gredby has descended from her fastness to offer tribute of a large fan-shaped nosegay, fragrant with sage, and banked up with hollyhocks, which she calls a 'boke'.

'I should like you to have something to remember you get home, Miss Editha,' she says, 'and the same likewise, so I've made so bold as to bring you a present.'

'O Mrs. Gredby, the flowers would have been wasted on Editha, as the landlady of the New Inn withholds of a white cloth from her basket, and displays two wicker chairs hanging pathetically over the wickerwork.'

'No, Miss Editha; flowers is very well, but you must put 'em on your drawing-room table, and you think no more of 'em as you pass clean out of your mind. But if you make yourself a fine pair of ducks, you don't forget *them*. Their very sight makes an impression. You allude to them afterwards, and say, "we had Mrs. Gredby's ducks." They're something to put upon, you see, miss.'

'I shall remember your kindness in any case, dear Mrs. Gredby,' says Editha, smiling.

'Yes, miss, and you'll remember them ducks, too, when you see a good gentleman. There hasn't been a finer couple in the county not within forty mile. I reared 'em myself, so I o'ersaw 'em besides feeding of 'em out of my own mouth when they were young.'

Mrs. Gredby expatiates on the baby—a chubby young gentleman, in a white pelisse and small sailor's cap—comes the train of some half-dozen carriages, which take Editha to Shrewsbury. She has books and papers in a basket, and a basket of Lochwithian peaches, and best of all a

fact is sufficient to fill her with uneasiness. She feels that she has been too long absent from home and duty—feels herself a neglectful wife, although she has been only obeying Herman in prolonging her stay at the Priory. How she longs to be with him—to look in his face, to see if he has still that worn worried look which made her wretched before she left home! How she longs to be sitting opposite him in the dear little study, pouring out that strong green tea which is his nectar, and listening to his literary plans! Between her and this delight there are only so many miles, so many hours; but her impatience grows as the miles and hours lessen.

There is a delay of two hours at Shrewsbury, and it is evening—a breathless evening, with a gray thunderous sky—when the train enters the terminus. Editha has written to announce her coming, and expects to be met at the station by Herman after this her first absence. She scans the faces on the platform eagerly as the train moves past them, but cannot see that one face, with its bright recognising look, as she has been picturing it to herself throughout the journey.

He is there, no doubt, she tells herself, though not in the outer edge of the crowd. She alights hastily, and hardly stops to see that nurse and baby make their descent safely, so eager is she to find Herman.

'Lor, mum, you've forgot your travelling-bag,' says the nurse, plunging back into the carriage, where that treasury of feminine necessities has been left in the rack.

Editha cannot think of travelling-bags. She is looking for Herman; but among all those hard-faced strangers his dear face appears not. The blankness sends a pang through her heart.

'Hadh't we better get a cab, mum?' says the nurse.

'Yes, Jane. I thought Mr. Westray would have been here to meet me.'

'And I should have thought so too, mum; such a lot of luggage we've got, and baby getting so sleepy, poor lamb.'

The 'poor lamb' is decidedly fractious. The heat, the dust, the long journey have tried his youthful temper. Jane struggles with the double burden of infant and travelling-bag. She has the basket with Mrs. Gredby's ducks over her arm. 'Porter!' she screams, in a shrill complaining voice, seeing that Mrs. Westray stands helpless, like a suddenly-awakened sleep-walker.

Porters come, and Mrs. Westray's luggage is selected from a mountain of trunks, portmanteaus, tin baths, japanned bonnet-boxes, and hampers, and then it is stacked upon a rickety-looking cab, and Editha, with one despairing look along the platform, takes her place in the vehicle.

It is a long drive to Fulham—a dreary one after that disappointment. How dull and murky London looks after the dewy freshness.

the heaven-soaring hills of Lochwithian—a hateful place to return to, assuredly, even though it means home! The long dusty road, the endless procession of shabby suburban villas, dust-whitened trees, cabs, straw, rags, and rubbish on the dusty pavements, sordid shops, ragged-looking omnibuses, everything ugly and poverty-stricken.

‘Why was he not at the station to meet me?’ That is the question which Mrs. Westray asks herself more or less throughout that long jolting journey. At the least it looks unkind. He is dining out, perhaps, at some social club-dinner; or has gone to see a new play produced at one of the theatres—the work of a rival.

‘If he had only written to tell me that he would be engaged this evening, I should have been spared the disappointment,’ thinks Editha, and then reproaches herself for feeling wounded by this seeming neglect.

‘No doubt he has some good reason,’ she tells herself. ‘He was too busy to come perhaps, and I shall find him at home, at work, and expecting me—in his old velvet coat, with books thrown about in every direction, and the tea-tray among his papers. Or if he has been obliged to go out, there will be a note to tell me why, and in an hour or two he will be back. I shall just have time to change my dusty clothes and see baby put to bed before he comes.’

Thus does Editha sprinkle cool patience upon her wounded spirit, and when at last the cab blunders into shabby old Fulham, whose High-street has a look of having been forgotten and left behind by the march of progress, she is prepared to accept things pleasantly, however they may fall out, and to give her husband loving greeting, even though he should have gone out to dinner on this particular Saturday, and not gladden her eyes till between eleven and twelve o’clock. She will say like Desdemona, ‘Men are not gods,’ and will be content with something less than ‘such observancy as fits the bridal.’

They have turned into the little lane that leads to Bridge-end House. Everything has the same dull and dusty look. The gray sky darkens with declining day. Putney-church clock strikes eight with a dismal clang. Nature wears no smile of welcome. The slate-coloured river frowns. The study blind is down. The cabman rings three times before the door is opened.

At last the parlour-maid appears, capless and slatternly. She comes slowly to the gate, opens it, and begins with a languid air to assist in carrying in the luggage. She brightens a little at sight of the ducks and the hamper.

‘Is Mr. Westray at home?’ asks Editha, very sure that he is not, since he has not appeared to greet her.

‘At home, mum? O no, mum. Didn’t you get his letter?’

‘What letter?’

'Telling you that he was going away, mum.'

'Going away—where? Has he gone away?'

'Yes, mum. He went off to France yesterday afternoon quite sudden. He wrote you a letter, mum, astin' you to stay with your par while he was away, and he told cook and me not to expect you for the next three weeks. But I'm afraid Selina must have posted the letter too late.'

'I had no letter,' replies Editha, bearing up against this blow with a heroic effort. How cruel, how heartless of him to leave her thus! What temptation that fame or gain can hold out should weigh against the anguish she feels at this desertion? He has left her—heedless of her fears—left her to enter scenes of danger, left her perhaps to die.

'Lor, mum, how white you do look!' says Mary Ann, the parlour-maid, who is not without compassionate feeling even for that natural enemy, a mistress. 'Master said he shouldn't be away much above three weeks, and the change would do him good. He was looking ill and tired, cook and me noticed. But of course, being out so late of evenings would make a difference.'

'He was out often,' falters Editha, hardly knowing what she says. O, bitter agony of disappointed hope, she feels as if life could never seem fair again.

'Well, yes, 'um. Pretty well every evening. It was dull and lonesome, you see, for him at home. Houses by the river is lonesome, except in the spring, when the laylocks and laburniums is in blow.'

Happily there is baby to be thought of. His fractiousness increases when he discovers that no preparations have been made for his reception; that the mattresses have to be dragged out of his cot and aired at a hastily-lighted fire, and that his nursery smells unpleasantly of mottled soap.

Cook has gone to pass the evening with her relations. The two young women bustle about, and get tea and a rasher for Mrs. Westray, and light the lamp in the study.

Here Editha takes her lonely meal, when baby has been cared for and made comfortable. The room is just as Herman left it, and speaks to her of him: books piled on the floor, the chairs, the table; papers scattered everywhere. His pipes, his tobacco-jars on table and mantelshelf. There was a time when he was less disorderly. These careless habits tell of a weary mind.

Hardest of all does it seem to have missed his farewell letter. Posted too late for yesterday's mail, it will only reach Lochwithian to-morrow morning, and cannot return to Fulham until Monday. All the blank desolate Sunday must intervene before she can have his letter, and know his reasons for breaking a promise that should have been held sacred. He assured her, when he laughed at her

fears, that he had no idea of accepting the *Day Star's* offer, and in the face of that assurance—which to her seemed a promise—he is gone. She sends for an evening paper, and tries to make out how things are going on at the seat of war. 'Our special correspondent' writes of deadly strife and desolated villages in the coolest and airiest manner; but his letter seems all confusion somehow to Editha. Krupp guns, skirmishes here, sorties there, the prospect of an engagement before long; French generals, princes of Hohenzollern behaving in the noblest and most gentlemanlike manner, and the general public being annihilated upon scientific principles. Shells, shrapnell, and explosives of all kinds flying about in every direction, even on one's paper as one writes, the correspondent insinuates. To-morrow, and Herman will have reached that horrid scene, and the Krupp guns, and grape and shrapnell will be flying about his sacred head.

Editha would give anything to see some one who has seen him lately—one of his friends, who could tell her, in the absence of his letter, what urged his sudden departure. There is Mrs. Brandreth, for instance; she would be sure to know.

'I will call upon her after church to-morrow,' decides Editha. She has never before had her carriage out on a Sunday, but on this occasion she orders her brougham for three o'clock. She has a feeling that Mrs. Brandreth is a person she can only visit in state.

It is not quite pleasant to her to call upon Myra, for though she has never acknowledged the fact even to herself, there is a faint dislike or distrust of that accomplished woman in her mind. But she cannot call upon her husband's bachelor friends—those happy-go-lucky artists or literary men in Thistle-grove or South Kensington—and she is very anxious to see some one who has seen Herman just before his departure; so she vanquishes that undefined feeling of reluctance, and drives to Kensington Gore.

She has been careful to put on her most becoming dress, her prettiest bonnet. Her gloves are fresh; every detail of her toilette perfect. There is nothing of the forsaken Ariadne about her.

This happens to be her first visit to the house in Kensington Gore. She has been asked often, but to Sunday dinners and Sunday musical evenings—symposia she disapproves.

Mrs. Brandreth is at home; indeed she rarely stirs outside her door on Sunday after ten-o'clock matins at a ritualistic temple in the neighbourhood. 'A day upon which small tradesmen drive their families about in tax-carts is a time for decent people to stay indoors,' she remarks, when any one suggests a Sabbath airing.

Mrs. Westray is taken up to the drawing-room—a room that has a cheerful glow winter or summer. The curtains and chair-covers are of a rich amber, the carpet deep brown shaded to palest

yellow. These amber tones set off the ebony furniture, the majolica vases and plateaus of deepest blue, the water-coloured landscapes on the warm dove-coloured walls.

Mrs. Brandreth is seated in the small inner room, among ferns and flowers which give a delicious coolness to the atmosphere. She is not alone. Lord Earlswood lolls upon one of the amber-satin chairs, turning the leaves of the *Connoisseur* languidly, as if he were looking vainly for some article within the limits of his capacity. He spends the greater part of his Sundays in attendance upon Myra. He has very little to say to her, and has no appearance of enjoying himself; but he comes and he stays, and she finds that it is impossible to enjoy a Sunday without this infliction.

Mrs. Brandreth receives Editha rapturously. Lord Earlswood abandons the *Connoisseur*, and shakes hands languidly, with a gentlemanlike melancholy, as a man too deeply afflicted by the burden of life to assume the mockery of smiles.

'My dear Mrs. Westray, how good of you!' cries Myra. 'What a pleasant surprise! I thought you were to be in Wales for the next six weeks. Your husband told me so.'

Editha explains the tardily-posted letter.

'And you came home and found him gone!' exclaims Myra. 'What a disappointment!'

'London so empty too,' interjects Lord Earlswood; 'positively disgusting. Met seven men between Pall Mall and Whitehall yesterday—I counted 'em—and four of them looked like government clerks.'

'It was a disappointment,' replies Editha gently, nay almost cheerfully. She has not come here to wear the willow. 'But if the change does Herman good I must not complain. There is no danger, I suppose?' she adds anxiously, looking at his lordship as the higher authority.

'O dear, no, I think not,' says Lord Earlswood. 'Newspaper correspondents never get shot—not in Europe, you know. In China they shoot all kind of fellows—diplomatic, civil, anything you like. But I fancy these German beggars will respect the press. Wouldn't like to see themselves cut up in the Radical papers—papers that write about the Millennium, and universal peace, and the lion lying down with the what's-its-name, and that kind of thing.'

Editha takes what comfort she can from this speech, and turns to Myra. She has a great opinion of that lady's worldly wisdom, and though she has not been able to like her, respects her industry and cleverness.

'Did you see Herman shortly before he left?' she asks.

'He dined here last Sunday; but he had not then decided on accepting the *Day Star* people's offer, though I know it tempted him.'

'And he left on Friday. He must have decided very quickly at last.'

'A fellow told me that the *Day Star* doubled their terms,' says Lord Earlswood, 'and Westray couldn't withstand the filthy lure.'

Editha blushes painfully. That expensive housekeeping is alone to blame for his need of money.

'I do not think money had much to do with Mr. Westray's decision,' says Myra. 'I believe he wanted change of scene and occupation. He was tired and bored. I never saw him looking so ill. I was one among his friends who advised him to accept the newspaper people's offer. Anything was better than to see him grinding on at the same mill for ever.'

This stabs Editha to the heart. She grows a little paler than before, but gives no other token of her wound. Lord Earlswood rises and fidgets about the front drawing-room, only divided from the inner temple by amber curtains. He is seen through the draperied archway roaming listlessly, looking at the pictures, opening the show books, generally at a loss what to do with himself.

'Did you hear how long he was to be away?' Editha asks.

'Not definitely. I don't suppose he had any idea as to time. It might be a question of weeks or of months.'

'If it is a question of months, I shall go to him,' says Editha.

'My dear Mrs. Westray, impossible! A man moving about here and there, at the seat of war—how could he be burdened with a wife? I can quite understand your anxiety, but you will see that in such a position he must be unfettered.'

'Yes, I suppose so,' Editha answers sadly. 'I must be patient. Good-bye, Mrs. Brandreth. I thought you would be able to tell me more perhaps. But I shall get Herman's letter to-morrow.'

'You are not going to run away directly? You must stay and dine with me. I have some charming people coming—an Italian poet and his wife—quite in a friendly way. Lord Earlswood will stay perhaps, and Mr. Tolley may drop in, but no one else. Do stop.'

'You are very kind; but I am too anxious. I shall be happier at home with baby.'

Myra averts her face lest Mrs. Westray should see the scorn that curls her lip at this remark. Of all things weak in woman Mrs. Brandreth most despises baby-worship.

'You won't be persuaded? I'm so sorry. And you will go home and drink tea all the evening, and cry over baby, instead of making yourself happy here, as you might if you chose. That is the great difference between men and women. Women nurse their troubles and make much of them; men thrust their worries out of doors, and keep them there until they're strong enough to climb in at the window.'

Mrs. Westray is not to be persuaded, and departs, feeling very happy for her visit to Kensington Gore.

'Poor thing,' murmurs Myra languidly, as Lord Earlswood paces prowling through the curtained archway, like a mentally exhausted wild-beast, 'how miserable she is!'

If other people's misfortunes, in a general way, are not without flavour of sweetness to poor humanity, what wicked rapture must a woman feel as she gloats over the agony of that soul whose happiness she has envied, whose innocence and purity she has hated for two slow joyless years—slow, though they have been as a triumphal procession to the temple of fame; joyless, though they have been filled to overflowing with what the world calls pleasure!

'Yes, she does seem cut up,' replies Lord Earlswood, with a diffident air. 'Rather unkind of Westray to go off like that.'

'I daresay he was thoroughly tired of his home, or he wouldn't have gone.'

'Tired of his home, and with such a pretty wife! I thought it was a love-match.'

'Love-matches are bad wear when a man marries a fool.'

'Is she a fool, do you think? I fancied she had a sensible look. I can't say I've ever heard her say anything clever. She doesn't fall into puns, and she isn't satirical, you know. But I should have given her credit for good sense. Looks as if she could make a button or sew on a button—good style too. Well, I'll go and look in at Tattersall's, and then go and dress for dinner. I hope the Italian people talk English?'

'Admirably.'

'Jolly clever of them, isn't it? I never could manage modern languages. I suppose it's from being over-dosed with the Classics when I was a boy.'

'And yet I seldom hear you indulge in Greek or Latin,' remarks Myra, smiling.

'No; nothing so caddish as a fellow quoting Plato or Cicero. It is not fit for a newspaper man or an Irish member. *Au plaisir*.'

And with this fragment of a modern language, Lord Earlswood starts, to loaf at the great horse-mart for the next hour or so, to smoke a cigar or two, drink a soda-and-brandy or two, yawn over the morning weeklies, and at eight o'clock reappear in Mrs. Brandreth's wing-room, faultlessly arrayed in evening dress of paragon simplicity—no studs, no chain, no trinket—black and white, like a burning letter.

Relieved of his lordship's unenlivening presence, Mrs. Brandreth enters the larger drawing-room thoughtfully. Her eyes shine with a kindled light. Her rival's misery is very sweet—the wine of life—yet almost as that cup which the same rival snatched from her

'Revenge is almost as good as love,' she tells herself.

She knows a good deal more about Herman than she has chosen to tell Herman's wife. She knows that he has left England because his affairs are in confusion, because he is in desperate need of money, and that let him do his uttermost it will go hard with him to save off ruin. She knows that the pretty house by the river is a perilous abode just now, and she means to make it more perilous if she can. Hatred so deep as hers is not to be satisfied by the temporary severance of husband and wife. She would see them parted for ever. And far away in the dim future, beyond their parting, Hope beckons boldly.

'He has found out his mistake long ago,' she tells herself. 'He comes to me for counsel, he comes to me for amusement. That pretty piece of simplicity wearies him. He loved me first—loved me when his heart was young and fresh and ardent. He will love me last.'

A Venetian mirror, framed in Sèvres biscuit, stands before the open window in the full bright sunshine. She catches sight of her face in the glass. O, cruel lines which passion and art have wrought there!—art being with her a kind of spurious passion. She is no longer young.

'But I am famous and I am rich,' she tells herself. 'People say I am handsome still; and in spite of those lines I am not thirty—not too old to be loved again, not too old to be happy.'

'Mr. Lyndhurst,' announces the servant; and if the spirit of evil had been ushered into that amber drawing-room his arrival could not have seemed to Myra more appropriate.

They shake hands with a cordial air—always on the best possible terms, knowing each other so thoroughly, and respecting in each other the highest modern development of the principle of evil.

'Where have you been hiding yourself all this time? And how well you are looking!' exclaims Myra in a breath.

'I have been in Wales.'

'Indeed! What part of Wales?'

'Within an hour's drive of Lochwithian Priory. Mrs. Westray's father has been very civil, and I have enjoyed the sweets of domesticity under his respectable roof.'

'You are a most extraordinary man.'

'Extraordinary because I go out of the beaten tracks in search of happiness! I have trodden the dusty high roads in the morning of life, and have had enough of the dust and bustle and sunshine. Afternoon has come, and I prefer the shade of silent woods. I did not think it was in my nature to be as happy as I have been at Lochwithian.'

'What a pity there should be any impediment to your happiness assuming a permanent form! These glimpses of Paradise must be

trying to a man of your temperament,' says Myra, with a sneer. 'What do you think of Mr. Westray having run away from domestic felicity?'

'I heard of it last night at the Agora. Have you any idea as to his reasons for leaving England?'

'I believe he owes more money than he finds it quite convenient to pay, and has some idea of arranging matters with his creditors more easily from a distance. He said something to me about having raised money by a bill of sale on his furniture; but he seemed to apprehend no immediate danger from that.'

Hamilton Lyndhurst smiles, a slow complacent smile.

'Yes, I know something about that bill of sale,' he says.

'You don't mean that you—'

'I know the people who hold it. A bad lot, rather. Foolish fellow, Westray, to put himself in the power of that kind of vermin. But your geniuses will hazard ruin in the future to escape trouble in the present. I think our friend Westray has pretty nearly drained his resources. He has had money in advance from his publisher, I know. Rather bad for poor Mrs. Westray if the bill of sale should be acted upon while he is away.'

'You mean that it would make her homeless?'

'Precisely.'

'She would go back to her father.'

'Do you think so? Now I believe she is just the woman whose pride would prevent her doing that. Those high-principled strong-minded women have the pride of Lucifer. No, she has married for love, and will stand true to her colours through good or ill; or else—'

'Or else what?' asks Myra, as he pauses meditatively.

'Lose her head, and accept the first haven that offers.'

FRUIT AND FLOWERS

'Fruits and flowers, lady fair,
Rich and luscious, ripe and rare !
Roses from the sunny South,
Peaches soft, that woo the mouth.
Plums—sweet lady, criticise—
Saw you e'er such hue, such size ?
Can you all their charms defy ?
Fruits and flowers, lady, buy.'

Fruits or flowers, rich and rare,
Tempted not that lady fair.
She had household projects deeper ;
She might get them larger, cheaper.
Roses were to her a sham,
Plum and peach prospective jam ;
Though the same might vended be
By the belle of Normandie.

But another standing by
Views that belle with different eye.
Roses of the sunny South
Tinge her cheeks and tint her mouth ;
While the living glow bespeaks
Peachy softness on her cheeks :
And the purple plumlike bloom
Lights an eye that seals his doom.

In the sunny Norman bowers
Gather'd he those peerless flowers ;
Heard the rosy lips outspoke
Love-vows ; kiss'd the peachlike cheek ;
Saw the sheen of purple eyes
Light up all his destinies—
Life from out that love's deep roots
Gathering flowers and storing fruits.

MAURICE DAVIE



George Kirby, del.

Parrot

FRUIT AND FLOWERS.

CARRIAGE PEOPLE

An Outburst of Envy

BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

AND Socrates to himself in the market-place, 'How many things are there here which I do not want!' *Sancte Socrate, ora pro nobis*, with all my heart (although I have but a small opinion of the individual morals of the philosopher); still the son of Sophroniscus would, I fear, have experienced some difficulty in being Socratic, from the point of view at least, in the British metropolis; for there is no city in the world so ill-provided with commodious and well-stocked markets as is this same London, about whose size and splendour we brag and boast so mightily. Nor do our deficiencies in this regard seem likely to disappear; for the new markets which speculators or philanthropists have striven to establish within the last generation—Finsbury, Farringdon, King's-cross, Columbia, and the rest—have all been lamentable failures. Nor, I confess, strolling through Covent Garden, can I imagine that Socrates would be able to discover many things, even in the central avenue, of which he did *not* stand in need. Surely Socrates must have a pineapple now and then, if only to flavour his West India rum withal; surely he likes a bunch of grapes, a melon, a Ribstone pippin, or a Jargonelle pear to moisten his philosophic fauces. Shall he not have an orange to suck while he is speechifying; a nut to crack while he is chatting with Plato; a mushroom to broil with his mutton-chop; some cabbages, onions, and potatoes for his vegetable fare; and a camellia to stick in the bosom of his *pallium* when he goes a philandering among the ladies? There is not much else—save, perhaps, a few bananas, and a shaddock or so, and peas and asparagus in and out of their seasons—to be found in Covent Garden. And our philosopher might furthermore look in vain, and with anger and vexation, for a vast number of things in the market. He might seek for more light and air—*mehr luft*—for a little more convenience of arrangement, and a little less evil-smelling vegetable refuse; for a little less ruffianly horseplay among the market-ingers-on; and for a little more care and concern on the part of the Ducal Owner for the property which yields him so magnificent a revenue. There are a great many things, I opine, which, could Antipope's husband come to life again, he might not find, howsoever much he stood in need of them, on the Bedford estate.

No, no; if you have an ambition to be Socratic—why not, when every idiot who flirts with a woman can prate about having a Platonic

affection for her?—go you to Crosse and Blackwell's, or to Fortnum and Mason's, or to Barto Valle's in the Haymarket, and there, I will be bound (if you are in a properly philosophic mood), you will find an infinity of things which you do not, and which you ought not to, want. Don't you think, for example, that you could do without cucumber vinegar or lemon pickle? Are caviar and corsteb, club chutnee and Royal Osborne sauce, essential to human happiness? Would you be very destitute without *pâté au diable* and potted char? Is life intolerable without Schabzeiger cheese, green truffles, fresh laver, pistachio kernels, Naples soap, cockscumbs, capsicums, Indian soy, *moutarde de Maille*, powdered celery, and cod sounds? You don't want any of these articles; they are all the silliest of luxuries, the merest of superfluities; but I want and yearn and pine for them all, because I am not Socrates, and because I am rapacious and greedy and envious.

Mutatis mutandis I have always envied Carriage People—principally, I daresay, because I am fond of personal ease, and am, besides, obese and infirm; but I rejoice to say that folks who, like myself, cannot afford to keep a vehicle of their own may, in a semi-Socratic manner, console themselves by asking, when a particularly grand equipage rolls by, 'How many people are there in London who are "carriage people," and how many of them can afford to keep carriages at all?' There is the rub, and a curious rub it is.

Fifty years since, or about the time that it occurred to Mr. John Thurtell, assisted by Messrs. Hunt and Probert, to murder Mr. William Weare of Lyon's Inn, it was thought—so at least one of the witnesses at the Hertford trial deposed—rather a respectable thing to keep a gig. Prodigious fun was made of this naive association between gig-driving and respectability; and the joke was somewhat cruelly worked by Mr. Carlyle, not only in the *Sartor Resartus*, but in many more of his sapient but uncomfortable essays. There seems, however, to have been a foundation of common-sense observation in the famous Hertford remark, 'I thought him a respectable man.' 'Why?' asked the cross-examining counsel. 'Because he kept a gig.' Well, and what then? Fifty years ago are beyond my personal ken, but are still within my mental purview; for who has not had relatives or friends who could remember 1824 very accurately, and tell us interesting tales about Jack Thurtell and the Fortunate Youth, and Mr. Bish the lottery-office keeper, and other celebrated personages (including Lord Byron, Charles Lamb, 'Janus' Wainwright the Poisoner, Hunt the Radical and Blacking-man, and Tom Spring the Pugilist) of the epoch when George IV. was king? Whenever I stand in need of information bearing on these bygone days when Plancus was Consul, or Sir Claudius Stephen Hunter was Lord Mayor, I go to dear old George Cruikshank, and 'tap,' so to speak, that perennial fount of memory which is yet green.

of observation which is yet undimmed, of humour which is yet cheery and sparkling. Excellent old man! may you and Mr. Thoms go down the hill together hand in hand, and prove, ere you reach its foot, that centenarianism may be a Fact. I have often asked G. C. a great deal about gigs, and I think he will bear me out in stating that, between 1820 and 1830, the most respectable people in England were habitual gig-keepers. Fast young bucks—roaring blades who knew the saloons of the theatres but too well; who patronised the P.R.; were on familiar terms with Belcher and Molyneux, and shook hands with Pierce Egan the elder; who frequented the 'Finish,' and sometimes accomplished a further termination to their evening's amusements by sleeping in the watchhouse—used to drive not gigs, but phaetons or stanhopes. The 'mail-phaeton,' with its heavy frame and pair of powerful horses, as then was not. A phaeton was quite a light and airy construction, perched on very high springs between two very big wheels. It had a somewhat prolonged existence; for it was in a phaeton that George IV., in his hot youth of pryncedom, used to drive 'Perdita' Robinson; and phaetons survived to be driven by 'Romeo' Coates and 'Pea-green Haynes' and 'Golden Ball' Hughes. There are no eccentric dandies, no characteristic *roués*, no humorous men about town nowadays. The mantle of Alfred d'Orsay has not fallen upon any English shoulders. Hyde Park cannot boast even a Baron Ferdinand Gerauld to astonish the *haut ton* with his ringlets, his spurs, and his embroidered pantaloons, and still further to astonish them afterwards by fleeing from the wicked world and turning Trappist. This is the age of the dead level, of the leaden mean, of the *ni plus ni moins*, of mediocrity in art, in letters, in science, in politics, in theology, and even in frivolity and dissipation. There is as much profligacy and there is as much wickedness rife just now as ever there were; but the first is rendered additionally disgusting by its idiocy, and the second is veiled half by hypocrisy and half by *mauvaise honte*. My lord no longer receives gamblers and horse-jockeys, poets and half-pay captains, bravoos and parasite chaplains, at his *lever*. He no longer sups with Kate Hackabout and Dolly Drury at the Flask in Chandos-street. He no longer stabs poor Will Mountfort the player, or joins the Mohocks, and goes about the town at night slitting poor Cockneys' noses in the Mall, or rolling women in barrels down Holborn-hill; nor eventually does he get stabbed himself in a duel behind Montague House. He is never 'cleazed out' at a 'hell' in St. James's. O dear, no! There are no hells nowadays, not even at Doncaster. Pandemonium has lost its plural form; but in the singular, I apprehend, it remains intact. The modern profligate is an eminently well-behaved, precise, reserved young simpleton. He wastes his estates, and sometimes wholly ruins himself before he is twenty-five, without getting any enjoyment

Kate Hackabout and Dolly Drury, those young more sensible nowadays to incur the risk of being sent to Brixton to beat hemp and suffer stripes. What do I speak of? The old hotel itself has disappeared, and Mr. Keyser's new hotel has appeared. A new Royal Mint will rise, on the site of the old grimy brick in whose dingy walls might have been cemented the faces of hapless women and naughty 'prentice lads. Mesdames and Drury have nothing to fear from a sudden visit of the Justice de Veil and the parish constables. Only fancy Henry or Mr. Knox going the round of the realms of London and taking fair (and false) haired Brompton and piebald South Belgravia (it used to be called Pimlico) into a trap. Alcibiades has grown more and more brainless and vapourish, and the naughty dames of Athens grown more and more shrewish and wise. Do you know Mrs. Catesby Parkhack? You may know Colonel Parkhack, it being currently reported (by her gallant husband, late of the Ombithug Irregulars, is a political resident at the Court of the Rajah of Rotteneburg) to write to her as the Hon. Mrs. Parkhack, she will not be long and in her dining-room hangs a fine-line engraving after Fitzdottrel's R.A. well-known portrait of the Right Hon. Lord Notimberland, presented to him by his tenantry on the occasion of his estate. Was not Mrs. Catesby Parkhack a relative of the distinguished nobleman? She was nothing whatever of the kind. A hundred and odd years ago she was Kate Hackabout, who came to London in the wagon, in the inn-yard by vile old Chartres; who was kept by a money-broker, and jilted him; who lived with Jemmy

Footguards, but rather looks down on the Blues as being sons of country squires, rich merchants, and the like; and she knows all the Corps Diplomatique. She toils not, neither does she spin (the hussey!), but she lives at the rate of at least three thousand a year; and more than that, she never runs into debt; is the most punctual of paymistresses; deals at the Civil Service Coöperative Stores; has a banking account and a cheque-book; and, I have not the slightest doubt, has put by something comfortable for a rainy day in Indian Guaranteed or Turkish Consolidés. Mrs. Catesby Parkhack is an eminently well-behaved, discreet, and *rangée* person. She is too judicious to attend St. James's, Piccadilly, or St. Kid-white's Chapel, Lavender-street, Mayfair; but she never misses any of the Sunday 'functions' at the fashionable Ritualistic church of St. Punchinello, Pimlico. Her Church Service—'Book of Offices' rather—is nearly as big as the Royal Red-Book, and is splendidly decorated with illuminations on vellum, due to the tasteful and devotional pencil of her friend and *protégé*, Biretta Faldstool, of the Colney Hatch Fine Arts Club; and quite recently she has been engaged in working a *cappa plurialis*, bordered with 'orphreys,' representing figures of saints, kaleidoscopes, and Cochín-China fowls, for the Reverend Acrobat Bowknees, the esteemed priest of St. Punchinello's, who has been in trouble lately with the Courts Ecclesiastical touching a reredos, or a roodloft, or a baldacchino, or something of that sort. She is a wonderful woman, this Mrs. Catesby Parkhack, *née* (ever so many years ago) Hackabout. She is so very respectable that you might fancy that she had kept a gig fifty years ago; for she is of no age. She was always young, and always will be young, I suppose. They tell me that you may buy youth, ready-made and on credit, in Regent-street or Bond-street, and that the Fontaine de Jouvence stands right in the midst of the Burlington Arcade. Be it as it may, no middle-aged men about town with whom I am acquainted have ever been able to discern any appreciable difference in Mrs. Catesby Parkhack. As she was, so she is; only she seems to be growing a little more Conservative, and is a trifle more pious on Sundays than she was wont to be. Her renowned Sabbath-evening parties are still attended by the best men-folks in the metropolis; but Mozart and Sebastian Bach are performed in lieu of *Giroflé-Girofla* and *La Fille de Madame Angot*; there is an Alexandre harmonium in the back drawing-room, and Alfred Pizzicato (whose real name is Pigskin, but who Italianised himself when he went to stay six months in Milan) comes and sings 'Angels ever bright and fair' in his little voice, while the *mayonnaise de volaille* and the *perdreaux aux truffes* are being prepared for supper. I believe that to the thorough consummation of Mrs. Catesby Parkhack's ambition two things only are lacking. She has not yet been presented at Court; and she would give her ears to be able to obtain

a card for the private view of the Exhibition of the Royal Academy. At the portals of both these paradisaical regions she is still a Pen and disconsolate. And yet she knows plenty of courtiers; and Slim, B.A., painted her portrait (half-length, three-quarter face; Mr. C. P. with a Maltese dog on her lap, a Skye terrier at her feet, a cockatoo behind her; the Koh-i-noor in her brooch, the 'Regent' in one of her bracelets, and the Lazareff on her left little finger, and a black boy in cloth of gold handing her a cup of *Sèvres bleu dauphin* full of pearls dissolved in white-wine vinegar) only last year, and got it hung on the line too.

And Dolly Drury—so well known fifty years ago as an *habituée* of the saloons of the Theatres Royal? My dear sir, *ne m'en parlez pas*. Dolly at the present day is as grand as a duchess. You may see her *carte de visite* in all the photograph shops, between the effigies of Lady Maniac, the celebrated Oriental traveller, and the Reverend Waygoose Sphoon, that shining light of the Baptist connection. Dolly in spangled tights and a bodice of the brightest tinsel—and nothing else; Dolly in a velvet riding-habit and a pheasant's wing in her hat; Dolly in a china-crape polonaise and a moire train as long as Upper Wigmore-street; Dolly's head with a 'Rembrandt effect' of light and shade. I think the woman will be taken next in an Elizabethan ruff, or a Greek helmet, or the Pope's triple crown. She cannot ride, she cannot act, she cannot dance; I am doubtful whether she can write, but she certainly cannot spell. She drinks like a fish; she swears like a trooper; and she can kick, on occasion, like a collier; but, at the same time, Mrs. Drewston—that is her present appellation—lives in a fine house in a fine part of the West-end, gives fine dinners, sees fine company, wears fine clothes and finer jewelry, and is affiliated to the great but mysterious class of 'carriage people.'

A wonderfully mysterious class those people form, to my thinking. How much will it cost you at the most moderate estimate to keep the quietest of broughams, with a single horse, and a driver in a sober quiet semi-livery? A couple of hundred pounds a year. I am afraid that a West-end job-master would not accommodate you even at that figure at the height of the season. Well, and a brougham and pair—a circular-fronted vehicle, your crest on the panels, well-matched horses, high steppers, good action (due to a stiff bit and a tight bearing-rein), coachman in handsome livery, your crest on his buttons, a cockade (you are not in H.M. service, but it doesn't matter a bit), buckskins, and picklejar boots,—how much shall we say for *that* little arrangement? Three hundred a year, or shall we put on another fifty? or—throwing in a Danish dog of the 'plum-pudding' pattern, with a brass collar and trained to trot behind your carriage—shall we say four hundred a year for the entire concern, 'lock, stock, and barrel,' as the Americans phrase

a complete entity? But when I come to the open barouches, the double-bodied closed carriages, and the high-hung chariots of the aristocracy—the carriages drawn by satin-skinned chestnuts or superb grays, with silver-plated harness; the carriages in the midst of whose sumptuous hammercloths, blazing with armorial bearings, sit coachmen with spun-glass wigs and pink-silk stockings, and to whose back-straps hang gigantic flunkies in plush and powder—I confess that I become baffled and amazed, and that I am no more able to form even an approximative estimate of the annual cost of those gorgeous equipages than I am to calculate how many guineas Mrs. Catesby Parkhack pays for her dresses, or how much Lord Claude Neverpay owes Mr. Fautenil, at the library in Bond-street, for stalls at the theatres where they play leg pieces.

Does everybody in London—I mean everybody who is anybody—possess an income of five thousand a year? Such apparently must be the case, to judge from the amazing number of private carriages you meet with in every part of London. Go to Paris, and it is with the extremest rarity that you see any *voitures particulières*, save in the Faubourg St. Germain, in the Champs Elysees or the Bois, in the Place de la Concorde, or on the quays in the neighbourhood of the hotels of the various ministers, or on the Boulevards as far as the Rue Richelieu, but no farther. A private barouche in the Rue St. Denis or the Rue Montmartre would be regarded as a curiosity. Even on the Place de la Bourse, when the vehicles retained by the speculators therein are most closely packed in front of the peristyle, the hackney carriages outnumber the private *coupés* by at least ten to one. In order to *rouler voiture* in Paris—and I will go back in this observation to the palmiest days of the Empire—you must either be a duke or a diplomatist, an American millionaire, a swindler, or a *coquette*. Go to Milan, and where do you find private carriages? On the Bastione, and occasionally in the Corso Vittorio Emanuele. Where at Turin? In the Via del Po. Where at Rome? On the Pincian Hill, and, going and returning therefrom, in the Corso. Where in Florence? In the Cascine. Where at Berlin? Under the Linden. Where at Vienna? In the Prater. Where at Madrid? On the Prado. And yet, in every one of the cities I have named, the stranger is often bidden by a sagacious and unprejudiced native to mark the amazing number of private equipages, and is often assured that the majority of the ladies and gentlemen in them cannot really afford to keep carriages. This is especially the case in Italy and Spain. How often have I been told, when I have seen some grand barouche or caleche, drawn by splendid horses, driven by a coachman, and attended by lackeys in glittering liveries, dash by, that the occupants were as poor as Job! *Iro pauperior*, poorer than the beggar of Ithaca who ran errands for Penelope's suitors, and whom Ulysses so unmercifully pounded. 'A carriage and horses,' my ip-

formant has often bitterly reminded me, 'are here the sole luxury of a poor, proud, and indolent nobility. In order to make a grand appearance in the Pincio (or, *mutatis mutandis*, the Prado) they deprive themselves of home enjoyments, home comforts, home necessities almost. They are content that their children (until they are old enough to be taken out for an airing in the carriage) should go in rags; they are content to live on macaroni and fried insides, on sausages and *garbanzos*, and to eat with iron forks and pewter spoons. They are content to live in rooms without carpets and to sit on chairs with three legs, so that every fine afternoon during the season they can come out on the Pincio (or the Prado) to salute and to be saluted by a nobility as poor, as proud, and as indolent as they.' 'But they must dress,' I have sometimes objected to these cynical remarks, observing the brilliant toilettes of the ladies in the barouches and the calèches. 'Carriage dress is a compromise,' my informant has mercilessly continued. 'In a carriage you need not be very magnificent below the waist; and she who is *mulier formosa* above may be very "fishy" indeed about her boots, her stockings, and her skirts. They never leave their equipages during their promenade. If they desire ices and sweetmeats, the café or pastrycook's waiter brings the required refreshment to the carriage door.' I wonder whether my cynical friend was telling me the truth; yet I have certainly often heard the same story among the Latin races, even in far-off Mexico and Cuba.

The ways and means of 'carriage people' in the United States, and notably in New York and Washington, need not be very mysterious to any moderately inquiring mind. It is as natural and (comparatively speaking) as easy for a 'smart' American, at some period or another of his career, to keep a carriage—be it a barouche, a calèche, a 'rockaway,' or a trotting wagon—as it is for him to have a brown-stone house with a marble façade, a box at the Academy of Music, a pew at the Church of the Puritans, and a first-class 'receptacle' (or grave) in Greenwood Cemetery to contain his 'casket' (or coffin), with himself in it, when life's fitful fever of speculation is over, and there is nothing more to be done in 'corners' connected with Erie or Fort Wayne. It is as much a matter of course with him to attain the dignity of carriage-keeping (if he be a clever American) as to resort to Saratoga or Long Branch or the White Mountains in summer time; to make periodical trips to Europe with his family, and to purchase an assortment of specimens of the Old Masters at Rome, to fit into the *flamboyant* frames he has purchased at Florence, and taking care never to give more than a hundred dollars for an original Rafaele or a warranted Titian. Keep a carriage! Why, he could keep six carriages if he chose. The American is bound to make money—somehow, and he makes it; and the carriage (generally driven in New York by a negro or an Irishman)

comes as a matter of course with the 'surprise parties,' the 'calico balls,' the terrapin soup, the chicken salad, the turkey and truffles, and the white-seal champagne, which, with iron pianos, rocking-chairs, ice-cream, Figaro cigars, Drake's Plantation bitters, and antibilious pills, go to make up the sum of Transatlantic luxury. Keep a carriage! Why, any average 'live man' in the States might back himself to keep a coach as big as Jaggernauth's car, drawn by twenty-four mad elephants, and ridden by Patagonian postillions, with Apache Indians mounted on giraffes for outriders, and covered all over with greenbacks. Accuse me not of hyperbole; think not I am exaggerating. I have known in my time a number of 'scientific Americans' who kept their carriages; and so surprising do I hold the energy, the perseverance, and the elasticity of that astonishing people to be, that were I to meet a quondam 'rocker-in to a faro bank' driving four-in-hand, an erst 'drummer to a dry-goods store' tooling an *attelage à la Daumont*, or the former 'bones' to a troop of nigger minstrels gracefully reclining in a barouche with postillions and outriders, I should not be in the least surprised. With all this, the display of private carriages in the American cities is kept somewhat within reasonable bounds. You rarely see the triumphant chariots of Shoddy, or Petrolia, or Sharealia out of the Central Park or Fifth-avenue, or lower down Broadway than Canal-street. The Americans, moreover, save when they are deliberately intent on imitating European manners (which they occasionally do, half seriously and half for fun), are not a brougham-keeping people. They like to be seen *thoroughly* when they are driven abroad; and through the windows of a brougham the pedestrian observer cannot see much more than the noses of the people inside. It is for this reason that the vast majority of American tourists dislike Venice. They may profess to admire the Queen of the Adriatic; but in their inmost hearts they detest her, because the city through whose broad and narrow streets the sea continually flows offers no facility for riding in open carriages. To be cabined, cribbed, and confined in a hearse-like gondola, to have to curb the neck and hinge the knee beneath the exiguous tilt, are abhorrent things to the citizens of the Great Republic.

But returning finally to my own country, the carriages and the carriage people do not cease to fill me with amazement and with bewilderment. Take London, in the season and out of the season, and you will be in danger of being run over by private carriages everywhere. It is, of course, obvious that at the dead time of the year—between the end of July and the beginning of October—the stream of vehicles in Piccadilly and Regent-street, and the crush and block in the Park, are considerably thinned. For this is the time when Mrs. Catesby Parkhack is yachting in the Gulf of Bothnia, and the beauteous Mrs. Drewston is disporting herself at Monte Carlo or Scarborough, being photographed, of course, three times a day

wherever she goes. Still, apart from the most fashionable thoroughfares of the West-end, there appears to be little if any solution in the continuity of equipages. On the dullest November afternoons you meet the grandest carriages, with wiggid coachmen and powdered footmen, and with coronets on the panels, in Whitechapel or in Norton Folgate. Oxford-street towards Christmas-time is almost impassable with broughams; private carriages abound in the Strand and Fleet-street, on Ludgate-hill, in St. Paul's-churchyard, and in Cheapside. The remotest suburbs are full of carriages. Are we really such a transcendently wealthy people? Are we all worth, or do we all earn, five thousand a year? Who pays for Mrs. Catesby Parkhack's low phaeton with the bright bay ponies, or for the clarence she uses in wet weather or on evenings when she patronises the theatres? Has the Duke of Doublethong settled for his drag yet? and will Lord Claude's cabriolet ever be paid for at all? These are considerations into which it would be perhaps impertinent to enter in detail, but which, I confess, perplex me sorely. The scope and purport, the meaning and significance of the hired brougham—I mean the carriage leased by the day, week, or month—you and I, my middle-class friend, can readily understand. There is no mistaking the aspect of the hired brougham. That it is a mere tenement let out in lodgings, and not a freehold mansion, is a fact which reveals itself, and in the most ignominious manner, directly it crosses your field of vision. The horse, with his fiddle-case head, his starting ribs, his low quarters, and his switch tail; the coachman, with his bibulous yet careworn countenance, with the gloves which are never clean, and the boots and gaiters about which there is always something vaguely but unmistakably wrong; the wheels, which never seem to be proper pairs; the cushions, which never afford easy sitting; the mat, in which there is always a hole; the door, which never shuts properly—all these things cry to the very housetops the fatal word 'hired.' Your friends and acquaintances discover at once that the vehicle in which you come to dinner is not your own, and disparage you accordingly. The very man from the green-grocer's, who stands beneath the portico (expectant of half-a-crown) when you depart, and cries out in a voice husky with innumerable heel-taps, hastily gulped behind the dining-room door, 'Mr. Caddison's carriage,' is perfectly well aware that the lamentable machine whose wheels come grating over the gravel is not your property—that it is hired, and that you are after a manner an impostor. But how about the carriages, double horsed, splendidly appointed, and with the coronets on the panels—do they all belong to the people who ride in them? and if so, may I be allowed to reiterate the question, have we all got five thousand a year?

THE ALEXANDRA PALACE

FOR ages Muswell Hill has been known as one of the most attractive of the northern heights of London, those heights the history of which William Howitt has written with pardonable prolixity and enthusiasm, and the literary associations of which would fill volumes. It is hard to feel that one has no space to speak of them—of Hampstead and its law-lords; of its churchyard, where Sir James Mackintosh, after life's fitful fever, sleeps well, and around which the charming women of the last century, such as Lucy Aikin, Letitia Barbauld, Joanna Baillie, loved to dwell; of its hotels, where generations of wits, from the days of Addison and Steele, have drunk their bottle and cracked their jokes; of its heath, of which Goldsmith wrote that nowhere in all Europe had he seen a finer view. Highgate also, in like manner, must be passed over, though one could say much of its taverns and its cemetery, of its houses inhabited by Lord Bacon and Andrew Marvel and Nell Gwynne, of Coleridge and Whittington. In the valley of Hornsey beneath is the cottage where Tom Moore wrote *Lallah Rookh*, and the churchyard where rest the ashes of the poet's daughter Barbara, and of the banker, poet, wit, and man about town, Samuel Rogers, whose pleasures of memory, if report be true, were not quite so sweet as his poem on the same theme, which, forty years ago, was one of the handsomest and properest books you could present to a young lady on her leaving school and entering on life. From the grave of Samuel Rogers, or from the northern heights of Hampstead and Highgate, it is but a mile or two to the hill on which in old times was a shrine, whereat many miracles were wrought, and where to-day perhaps is the grandest miracle of all—the Alexandra Palace. I am old enough to remember the original structure, which terminated its short but brilliant career of a fortnight in a conflagration most piteous to behold. As I saw the last of it then; as I watched Mr. Quilter saving his water-colours, which he sold the other day for the trifling sum of seventy thousand pounds; as I wandered among the *débris* which clothed the sides of the hill, consisting of china, glass, and mosaic jewelry from the exhibition department; baked meats and bottled drinks and electro-plate, all more or less tarnished with smoke and fire, from the stores of Messrs. Bertram and Roberts; as I contemplated all the figures from the Vienna Exhibition in their national costumes on their backs on the grass, with mild imbecile faces and wooden heads, as if unconscious of the dangers from which they had narrowly escaped, and of the busy scene enacted around them—little did I imagine that

in a couple of years' time once more the Alexandra Palace would rear its head on Muswell Hill; that once more on its opening-day the bâton would be wielded by Sir Michael Costa; that once more the rich notes of Titiens would ring in its central hall; and that in spite of rain and wind, and mud and mire, some ninety thousand spectators, male and female, old and young, rich and poor, from the counting-houses of the City, from the palaces of Belgravia, from the quiet and pleasant houses of the northern districts, in fact from all parts of the metropolis, would climb the hill, and be present in all their bravery of attire and joyousness of heart. After the failure of the various efforts to utilise the ground as a place of resort for the people, after the catastrophe which befell the original palace, the directors of the company are to be praised for the pluck with which they set to work to repair disaster and insure success—efforts in which I must admit they have been well backed up by Sir Edward Lee, of Dublin Exhibition fame, and his well-trained staff.

It is scarcely necessary to describe the building, with the outside and inside of which it is to be hoped by this time most of the readers of *Belgravia* are familiar. It is a matter of taste I admit, but externally it does not seem so attractive as the old. Internally, however, the place gains on one, and you like it better the more you see of it. In reality the new palace is far more convenient than the old. The centre hall, the finest in London, can seat twelve thousand visitors and an orchestra of two thousand, and its acoustic properties are all that could be desired. It is also a matter of fact that the partition walls are filled-in with glazed doors which fold into recesses, so that, as notably in the case of the corridor connected with the refreshment department, you have a fine view from one end of the building to another. One great advantage of the place is that you are soon out of it into the fresh air, whether you seek that in the little nook known as the Italian Garden, or at the numerous places of exit, by means of which you can escape from the crowd and contemplate the unrivalled scene of loveliness all round—for you get no finer view in Middlesex than that from Muswell Hill. Another advantage of the Palace is the seclusion of each department. There are people, I believe, who object to theatres, who hold them to be naughty places, and who charitably deem those who resort to them, and especially actors and actresses, as little better than the wicked, classing them in the same rank as French freethinkers or Fijian cannibals. 'You see,' said one of them to me, a heavy father of a family, 'you see I can take my children to the Alexandra Palace, and they need not know that there is a theatre there at all.' The concert-room in like manner is cut off from the rest of the building, and so is the exhibition and sale department. I own I greatly rejoice in this latter arrangement. I have no objection to a display of attractive wares. Mr. Chaffers junior will show you such porcelain

vases and such lacquered boxes from Japan as will make your mouth water; and if you are a tiller of the soil, Mr. Carter's cabbages and turnips will send you into fits; and as for the elegant little trifles in the way of lace and bijouterie, which handsome young ladies will try and tempt a fellow into buying, to say nothing of Mr. Benson's clocks, of Messrs. Elkington's electro-plate, and of Messrs. Peek and Frean's biscuits, and neat cases of apparently refreshing liquors in the corridor; well, all these things are excellent in a bazaar, and I hope that those who placed them in the Alexandra Palace may find a profit in doing so. It is quite right that a man, or a woman either, should be able to turn an honest penny when he or she has a chance. But one may have too much of a good thing. And as Biddy Fudge—or if not Biddy, her brother, or one of the family—objected to the flower-girls of Paris 'that they spoil a romance with pecuniary views,' so the present writer may be forgiven if he remarks that business is business, and pleasure is pleasure, and that when in pursuit of the latter, one had better not have too much of the shop. Men do not always have a cheque-book in their pockets, nor are all millionaires. In the picture department I learn from Mr. Spackman that already a good trade is being done: the picture-galleries exist for such a purpose, and at the Alexandra Palace I believe, as regards them, you may go farther and fare worse. But one does not always want to be purchasing carpets, or pianos, or even wedding-cakes and perambulators, and it is quite as well that the work of buying and selling and getting gain be not too prominent in a place of amusement and popular resort. And after all, it is not a mere bazaar or an industrial exhibition the British public desiderate; they have even not taken kindly to education and self-improvement. If England were polled to-morrow, the vote would go dead against the School Boards. The Panopticon was a failure till it became the Alhambra; and the lectures and lecturers which were to have turned the Crystal Palace into a modern university are unknown to the gentleman who goes there to enjoy his lunch.

This brings me to the consideration of the principal feature of the Palace—its out-door grounds and the uses to be made of them. Curiosity will lead the ladies to inspect minutely the Japanese village, which was so prominent an attraction in the Vienna Exhibition, and to study the diving apparatus, or to go as far as the banqueting hall—which was to have been a German gymnasium, and which now pays better devoted to gymnastics of another sort. But the grounds are fine, and their natural advantages have been made the most of by Mr. M'Kenzie, who has recollected that the place is a park and not a flower-garden, and has studied not so much minute detail as general effect, and it is there the visitors will chiefly disport themselves. The Park is more than 220 acres in extent, and is well wooded and supplied with ornamental water, and you may

hear at this time of the year the cuckoo by day and the nightingale by night. The Grove—a still pleasanter bit of shrubbery and greenery, as Leigh Hunt would have called it—of about 17 acres of land, has been wisely added. The reader may remember, now I have quoted Leigh Hunt, that he was born in the quiet village of Southgate, just at the north of the Park, and that he thanked God—as indeed he had every reason for doing—that he was born in a district of such rustic charms. Well, these charms are more or less attached to all the northern suburbs still; and nowhere are they more fully conspicuous, nowhere is the grass greener, the landscape more undulating, the foliage of the oaks and elms finer than in the Alexandra Park.

Of course the Grove is the climax of the place. It is a tradition—which I cannot, however, find to have much foundation in fact—that Thrale lived in the Grove, that he was visited there by Johnson; and to this day there is an avenue bearing the title of Dr. Johnson's Walk. Of course I can't pretend to say that Dr. Johnson never set his foot in the Grove at Muswell Hill; I think, perhaps, the chances are he did. We hear of the learned lexicographer at Hampstead, and we know one of the men whom he most loved, and whose society he most enjoyed, was Beauclerk. We know—does not Boswell tell us?—that Johnson visited him at Windsor, and that he got up one night to have a 'frisk' with him and Langton, which, after a bowl of bishop in a Covent-garden tavern, terminated with a row down to Billingsgate. Moreover, when Beauclerk was ill, did not Johnson say, Boswell writes, with a voice faltering with emotion, 'Sir, I would walk to the extent of the diameter of the earth to save Beauclerk'? And if he would have done so, we may infer that when well he went as far as Muswell Hill to see Beauclerk, which would have required a less waste of strength and shoe-leather. Of Muswell Hill just after Beauclerk's time the Honourable Mrs. Boscawen thus writes to dear Mrs. Delany. She describes it as an adventure. Lady Murray had given her a catalogue of the plants that were to be sold at Muswell Hill the following Monday. Accordingly she drove off to see the plants, and being early, wished to walk round the grounds, where, she writes, 'I had often admired many curious trees and shrubs. The gardener said no; the plants were to be seen in the library, and farther I must not go.' (Let me add, Beauclerk had died in 1781, and his library had been sold for upwards of five thousand pounds.) The lady in vain remonstrated. As she grumbled, she continues, 'a gentle voice said, "The master of the house, Mr. Potter, is just coming down that walk." For him I waited, and soon Mr. and Mrs. Potter and the three Miss Potters appeared. To them curtsying low, I told my wish and my name. They most graciously said I should walk all around, and they would attend me. They did, and soon fell into admiration at my knowledge when I told them this was

"hemlock spruce" and that a "deciduous cypress." At length we came to a Roman altar, and there my landlord instructed me in his turn. He showed me a Greek inscription upon it; said it came from Jerusalem—for Mr. Beauchamp spared for no expense in these things—and bid me observe the hollow at the top, which was for holy water. I said I believed that was only used by Roman Catholics. He said, "Yes, it was a *Roman Catholic altar*, fetched from Jerusalem, of a vast age indeed." And thus we part with Mrs. Boscawen and the traditions which connect Johnson with the Grove at Muswell Hill. It is to be feared the young and rising generation care very little for such things. It was very different when I was a good boy, and learned from Agnes Strickland and her gifted sisters—Mrs. Moody and Mrs. Trail, author of the *Backwoods of Canada*—to write poetry, which they were good enough to hear me repeat in their fine old dining-room at Reydon Hall. I question whether Dr. Johnson's ghost ever would seek to revisit the Grove. What can it be expected to care for picnics and wedding-breakfasts, for Swedish restaurants and croquet-grounds, or even for 'the performances of the Company's military band in an open-air orchestra'—I quote the programme—'of suitable design'? Such sublunary trifles

'Erebus disdains;

Calm pleasures there abide—majestic pains.'

The fact is, the Alexandra Park and Palace are more especially fitted for out-door sports and pastimes, and we want such places as London increases daily, and lays its heavy hand more and more on rural sights and scenes. Fresh air and healthy recreation are needed in such a city as London, where the young men spend all day in stuffy counting-houses and busy courts, where the sun never shines, and where the sweet perfume of the country with healing on its wings is never borne. Dr. Watts was an excellent man. It was quite right to erect a monument to his memory as the good people at Southampton did the other day; nor could Mr. Samuel Morley, M.P., have done better than go there to preside on the occasion of its inauguration; but Dr. Watts did write nonsense sometimes, and especially when he wrote that 'the mind's the standard of the man.' I believe in size: the men who have ruled the world have been big men; never did I feel this more than when I stood in the old romantic town of Godfrey of Bouillon a few days after the battle of Sedan, and saw wagon-loads by the hundred of little puny Frenchmen on their way to Germany, and contrasted them with the big square-headed Germans, in whose custody they were: truly the latter—Teutons, blue-eyed and yellow-haired—were sons of Anak, and the little Frenchmen seemed pigmies by their side. Ever since I have had increased faith in bone and muscle; and in the England of the future, if we are to hold our own, we shall want bone and muscle; and in the

fine grounds of the Palace ample preparation has been made for the manufacture of either. On the artificial lake in the north boating and other aquatic sports are carried on; on our left as we enter by the rail there are fine archery grounds. The cricket-ground is the best on the north side of London, being ten acres in extent, or two acres larger than Lord's, with two pavilions, and every convenience for cricketers. In time a fine open-air swimming bath, now in course of construction, will be completed. Bicycling and all athletic sports will be encouraged; and now that the London apprentice may no longer disport himself in Moorfields, it is desirable that his modern successor be equally catered for. After all there is nothing in a sanitary or national point of view of more pressing importance than the physical education of the people. From that to horses the transition is natural. The success of the races hitherto held at the Alexandra Park have demonstrated that it is the natural suburban home for such sports, and in the grand stand the ladies can enjoy a race without having anything to fear from the weather. The trotting ring, on the American principle, is not only a novelty, but will do much to develop the best qualities of our horses. Already I find horses are coming to the Park from all parts of the world, and if in consequence horse-flesh be cheaper and better, a vast benefit will be conferred on the middle and upper classes of society. One word as to the refreshments. If hunger be the best sauce, I know no place where a man will have a better chance of enjoying his food than in the dining-rooms and bars with which Palace and Park alike rejoice. There is no air more bracing and appetising than that of the north of London. Even at Holloway this is the case. The respected governor of the City gaol there told me one day, when I had to pay the place a visit, that he found the prisoners ate as much food again there as they did at Newgate. Bertram and Roberts know this. Undoubtedly, as I can testify from personal experience and observation, one gets terribly hungry and thirsty on Muswell Hill.

Of course there are those who lament the erection of such places as the Alexandra Palace, but the philanthropist will rejoice. It is an immense improvement on the old disreputable tea-gardens and drunken fairs in which our forefathers took their pleasures sadly. Even the rough becomes refined and the snob less of one in good society. We are all of us the better for a day spent in hearing good music, looking at good pictures, breathing pure country air, seeing people enjoy themselves. But perhaps the best thing in its favour has yet to be said—the Alexandra Palace is accessible in twenty-two minutes by railway from the City, and is within a six miles' drive from Charing Cross.

J. EWING RITCHIE.

HYSTERIA ON PARNASSUS

the manufacture of a literary reputation is in these days more of a mechanical process than anything else. Certain definite forces have been set in operation, and certain ascertainable results will be forthcoming. It is the age of advertising and it is the age of puffs. Authorship is a trade, and it is amenable to the same principles and governed by the same practices as any other form of commercial enterprise. If one walks down Piccadilly any Levée or Drawing-room day in this leafy month of June, one is pretty sure to witness an apparition which may surprise the intelligent foreigner. It is altogether a highly grotesque affair. A tiny conveyance drawn by a pair of miniature ponies, a liliputian postillion with powdered wig, dressed in light-blue jacket, and boots trimmed with gold lace, an equally diminutive footman perched on the pedestal behind—these are details which may suggest the *tout ensemble* of the equipage of General Tom Thumb. But tiny as are the steeds, the vehicle, and attendants, it is a full-grown couple—a man and woman of complete stature, and whose ineffable dowdiness of appearance forms a squalid contrast to the tinsel decoration of the turn-out—such is this odd machine upon wheels whirling along in the stream of houghams, barouches, victorias, and 'T-carts,' amid the merriment of the Arabs and the curiosity of the loafers. If you look at the hull of the body of the *carruca* in question, you will see that it is pasted over with placards which proclaim the fact that the seven-and-sixty shirts of Sewing Machine, 999 Oxford-street, are unequalled in the world, and that for cheap grocery there is no man like the Great Bung of Brompton-road. Contemporary literature presents to us an exactly analogous phenomenon; only in this case it causes no astonishment, and the long-suffering British public observes it with admiration and awe. Periodically there is an extraordinary bustle in the thoroughfares of criticism. You might imagine from the excitement and clamour, the stir and the suspense, that the advent of an intellectual giant was announced. Nothing of the kind; it is our young friend the advertising urchin over again. The critics tinkle as loudly as if they all of them, to say nothing of the bard whom they single out for honour, had laid eggs, and your ears are deafened by the prodigious din. It is annoying to experience such a disappointment. But the device has not been unsuccessful to those immediately interested in it, and the Sewing Machines and Bungs of our literature with their patrons—exultant as the latter are at the

prosperity of their *protégés*—have contrived to thrust themselves upon the attention of the public.

If one excepts the earlier works of Mr. Browning and Mr. Tennyson, the so-called popularity of all the poetry of the day has been secured by expedients of this nature; and I am bold to say, as I am prepared to prove, that in the course of the last twenty-five years there is no metrical writer in the English language who has advanced a single inch in public esteem, who has sold a single copy of his works, or been credited with coming within a thousand miles of the heights of Parnassus, unless his progress has been heralded by one of the critical cliques of the period. The crazes of criticism vary from time to time. We are now possessed by a *furor* for pre-Raphaelitism and Hellenism. Mr. W. Morris and Mr. D. G. Rossetti have each their *claqueurs* in the press, who are never wearied of protesting that the authors of the *Earthly Paradise* and the *Blessed Damozel* are the greatest poets whom this century has produced, inferior it may be to Shakespeare, but certainly superior to Byron. A certain disciple of this school, Mr. W. B. Scott, has recently published a volume of verses which are 'far-off echoes of the master-strains,' and that too has received an utterly extravagant amount of inflated eulogy. Similarly, there can be no doubt that Mr. Browning's last poem is his worst—the most pedantic, the most prosaic, the least likely to please or to be intelligible to posterity. But then it contains a host of allusions to Greek literature in general, and to Aristophanes and Euripides in particular—allusions which Mr. Browning has caught up parrot-like from the Master of Balliol—and it is applauded by these besotted Aristarchi of journalism as a work of immortal art. This sort of thing is not criticism at all; it is cant—cant more or less educated, no doubt; the cant of culture, if you like; but still cant, genuine, unmitigated, and detestable. Between twenty and thirty years ago, a critical craze of a different kind prevailed. That was in the ante-pagan and pre-pre-Raphaelite period. One heard less about art and more about nature. The world learned one fine morning, on the authority of the *Athenæum*, that a new poetical luminary of the first magnitude had just burst across the horizon. A fresh 'school' had asserted its existence north of the Tweed, and the achievements of one of whose members were to rekindle the forgotten glories of modern Athens. The name of the school was the Spasmodic, and the name of the bright particular star was a writer who assumed the obvious *nom de plume* of 'Sydney Yendys.' This cryptogram, when done into the plain prose of every-day life, denoted the flesh-and-blood reality of Mr. Sydney Dobell. Mr. Sydney Dobell was not, indeed, a Scotchman by birth. He was the son of a wine-merchant, and until Mr. Nichol informed the world that the place of his nativity was Cranbrook in Kent—he himself being 'the eldest son of the descendant of an old

Sussex family, distinguished on the Cavalier side when Charles was king—it was believed that he was born at Hackney. But Mr. Dobell was Scotch by adoption. He lived a great deal in Edinburgh, and his literary brother-in-arms was Mr. Alexander Smith, the arch-poetical charlatan of his time. The late Alexander Smith was a semi-instructed and wholly uneducated man, with a natural turn for writing smart prose, who chose to consider himself on this account a heaven-ordained poet. His *Summer in Skye* is a volume of capitally-written sketches; his *Life Drama* has no characteristics but hyperbole, and no features but extravagance. However, the *Athenæum* declared on its veracity as an organ of contemporary criticism that a new order of divine bards had arisen, and that in this hierarchy the author of the *Roman* occupied the most commanding place.

Unfortunately, when the public came to taste the vintage of which the *Athenæum* had given it such preposterously belanded samples, a good many wry faces were made. It might be very well to say that the new beverage was the pure unadulterated juice of the grape, as grown and drunk on the slopes of Parnassus; that all the stuff which men and women had hitherto drunk, under the impression that it was the real article, was drugged—that Byron was doctored, and Shakespeare medicated. The public exclaimed that if that was the case, it would sooner quaff its original and noxious beverage to the end of the chapter, instead of this queer-tasting *elixir vite* distilled from the sacred source of Castaly. Mr. Disraeli has told us in one of his novels of two gentlemen who dined together, and fancied themselves a political party. In like manner the Spasmodic bards of the North supped together, and imagined they were a school. The delusion was fostered by the satellites whom their local notoriety attracted, and the hallucination was encouraged by the plaudits of the great authority of periodical criticism. At that time there was a good deal of tolerably pleasant society in Edinburgh, and Edinburgh society, immensely flattered by the *Athenæum*, commenced to swear by the bard Dobell and the poet Smith. Personal worshippers and humble imitators were not wanting. Young advocates without a practice and newly-fledged doctors waiting for patients abounded in Edinburgh—many of them enthusiastic, intelligent, with a genuine aptitude for literary composition as well as literary devotion. To rave about nature and the universe, and the sea and the sky, to talk second-hand philosophy, to spout their own and their friends' verses, to take whisky-toddy like men, to discuss every conceivable subject under the face of the sun, to lay down the law for every one, to wear uncouth clothes, and to adopt an eccentric mien—these were the qualifications for admission into the company of those who made up the Spasmodic school, the recognised and native head of which was Mr. Alexander Smith. It is true that a

Dobell was admitted to be greater even than a Smith ; but then Mr. Dobell had the misfortune to be a Southron, and provincial vanity or patriotism was quite as much an element in the articles of the faith of this literary coterie as loyalty to the grand cause of metrical hysteria.

The writings of Sydney Dobell and Alexander Smith have, a few short pieces excepted, become already forgotten. No one reads, or could read, nowadays *Balder*, the *Roman*, and the *Life Drama*; and probably the few who did read those intolerably diffuse works once were at the time extravagantly exaggerated. It is incredible that a man of taste, as Alexander Smith in some respects undoubtedly was, should have produced the absurdities which every page of his poems displays. I really do not know that, clever as Professor Aytoun's satire upon the Spasmodic writers—*Firmilian*—is, it reads at all more like a satire than does *A Life Drama* itself. When one comes across such lines as these :

'For as a torrid sunset boils with gold
Up to the zenith, fierce within my soul
A passion burns from basement to the cope.'

'Most souls are shut
By sense from grandeur, as a man who snores
Night-capp'd and wrapp'd in blankets to the nose.'

'When the dark dumb Earth
Lay on her back, and watch'd the shining stars,—

such lines, to pick only a few at random out of a whole mass of similar extravagances, remind one of the splendid turgidities of *Bombastes Furioso*, or the poetic fustian on which Persius has been so severe, and which he has parodied so cleverly in his first satire :

'Sic costam longo subduximus Apenino

Torna Mimallonels implerunt cornua bombis,
Et raptum vitulo caput ablatura superbo
Bassaris, et lyncem Mænas flexura corymbis
Euion ingeminat ; reparabilis aasonat Echo.'

The truth is that any travesty of the most characteristic manner of Alexander Smith, and in some degree of Sydney Dobell too, is impossible. *Firmilian* is a clever and amusing composition, but it is not one whit more preposterous than *A Life Drama*.

'A drunk mariner
Who, stumbling o'er the bulwark, makes a clutch
At the wild incongruity of ropes.'

'To recreate stupendous harmonies.'

'I watch them as the watcher on the brook
Sees the young salmon wrestling from its egg,
And revels in its future bright career.'

'Where am I? If my mind deceives me not,
 Upon that common where, two years ago,
 An old blind beggar came and craved an alms;
 Then he, destroying a stupendous thought
 Just bursting in my mind—a glorious bud
 Of poesy, but blasted ere it's blown!—
 I bade the old fool take the left-ward path
 Which leads to the deep quarry, where he fell—
 At least I deem so, for I heard a splash;
 But I was gazing on the gibbous moon,
 And durst not lower my celestial flight
 To care for such an insect-worm as he!'

All this may be exquisitely sonorous fooling, but it finds its exact parallel in passages from the *Roman* and *Balder*. What can be more ludicrously fantastic than

'The haughty sun of June had walk'd long days
 Through the tall pastures, which, like mendicants,
 Hung their sere heads and sued for rain!'

And again from the same poem—the *Roman*:

'One. I've a good tale.
 Another. I better.
 Another. I the best.
 Another. Mine caps superlative.
 Another. Hurrah! and mine's
 A feather in the cap.
 Another. Boys, mine's the bird
 That grew the feather.'

Or take this from *Balder*—and such specimens might be multiplied to infinity:

'Yon floors, in whose black oak
 The straiten'd hamadryad lives and groans.'

But the story of the satire of *Firmilian* lies less in its parodies of eccentricities of style than in its overt attacks upon the method and the principles of the Spasmodic writers. To a mind like Aytoun's, educated in the traditions of poetical correctness, and to an ear attuned to the harmonies of the poets of Athens and Latium, such tricks of style and excesses of diction as those which, in the opinion of the Spasmodic writers and their partisans, constituted the sum and substance of inspired excellence, could not be otherwise than odious and intolerable. It was, I believe, in 1853 that Mr. Smith's *Life Drama* and Mr. Dobell's *Balder* appeared. 'The present book,' wrote its author of the last-named poem, 'is the first part of a work which I hope to complete in three parts. I intend as the principal subject of that work the progress of a human being from doubt to faith, from chaos to order. Not of doubt incarnate to faith incarnate, but of a doubtful mind to a faithful mind. In selecting the type and conditions of humanity to be represented, I chose, for

several important reasons, the poetic type and the conditions of modern civilisation.' Balder, the hero of the Dobellian *chef-d'œuvre*, is a moody maudlin latter-day Werther; a variety of that species of familiar melodramatic characters which may boast Childe Harold as their paternal, and Paul Clifford as their maternal, grandfathers. Balder lacks and makes no pretence to the masculine vigour of the Byronic type. He is a poetic recluse, dwelling in an 'old tower gloomy and ruinous,' wherein he makes his eyrie 'as an eagle among the rocks;' he has married a pretty wife, of whom his superior intellect tires; the fruit of their union is a baby, in whom it would be too much to expect him to take a paternal interest, and who appropriately dies; while the 'tragedy' closes on the determination—a determination that he justifies on grounds of transcendental ethics—of Balder to kill his unfortunate spouse, whom he has long since worried out of her wits. This is the precious work which Mr. John Nichol—a gentleman whose abilities I admire, and whose critical appreciation, when it is not warped by the sentiments of a personal partisanship, I most cordially recognise—characterises as 'the embodiment of the author's deepest thought and highest poetry.' *Balder*, Mr. Nichol naïvely informs us, was 'with the general public and the majority of critics less fortunate than its predecessor (the *Roman*). In the first place, it is harder to read, and the majority of readers are intolerant of poetry that taxes their wits.' I venture to think that the majority of readers are right, and that it is no more part of the mission of a poet to turn himself into a propounder of Chinese puzzles than—as the wounded Southerner, whose life's blood was ebbing fast, remarked to the interrogatory priest—of a clergyman to vex the last hours of a parishioner with inconvenient conundrums. 'The plot,' Mr. Nichol euphemistically continues, 'is painful, and the thought somewhat monotonous; for it harps, though with marvellous subtlety, on a few strings; and we are wont to demand from verse, above all things, pleasure and variety. . . . Side by side with passages of Shakespearian grasp we have outrages against taste and sense.' With the single exception of the epithet Shakespearian, this is a just criticism enough. In a poem of between eight and nine thousand lines, which is the work of a man who was unquestionably very clever, very fanciful, and with an abounding gift of words, it is morally impossible that we should not come across, in juxtaposition with rhapsodies and soliloquies and descriptions of the most execrable taste, passages of genuine poetic beauty. I confidently quote the following as a specimen of rare poetic merit, clear in idea, hard and distinct in outline, excellently conceived, most admirably, most tersely, and most powerfully expressed:

'I ne'er see Milton, but I see the Alps
As once, sole standing on a peak supreme,
To the extremest verge surmount a gulf,

I saw height after depth, Alp beyond Alp,
 O'er which the rising and the sinking soul
 Sails into distance, heaving as a ship
 O'er a great sea that sets to strands unseen.
 And as the mounting and descending bark,
 Borne on exultingly by the under deep,
 Gains of the wild wave, something, not the wave,
 Catches a joy of going and a will
 Resistless, and upon the last lee foam
 Leaps into air beyond it,—so the soul,
 Upon the Alpine ocean-mountain tost,
 Incessant carried up to heaven and plunged
 To darkness, and still wet with drops of death,
 Held into light eternal, and again
 Cast down, to be again uplift in vast
 And infinite succession, cannot stay
 The mad momentum, but in frenzied sight
 Of horizontal clouds and mists and skies
 And the untried anare, springs on the surge.'

After one has read a score of lines of this sterling stamp, one is quite sure to encounter some outrage upon correct poetic feeling of the grossest kind. Either it is some monstrous image, or some grotesquely stilted extravagance of phrase, or some hideously technical word, or some clumsy archaism—of which last Mr. Dobell and Mr. Smith were both extremely fond. In other words, the Spasmodic poets write exactly as one might expect men of the true poetic nature, who have narrowly escaped being men of genius; men who certainly have a singular faculty of expression, but who are absolutely uneducated; men who have been so spoiled by the flattery of each other and of their local admirers, that they have stereotyped their idiosyncratic defects, and exalted and magnified them as if they were virtues—exactly, I say, as we might expect such men as these to write. There is a confused hubbub of ideas, an enormous tissue of words, with here and there something really felicitous and elegant, and here and there a *purpureus pannus*, whose vulgarity is gross, glaring, and irredeemable; there is no intellectual concentration; no sense of suppressed power; no logical subordination of thought—that subordination which is so conspicuous in a really great poet like Byron, however white the heat of passion at which he writes. Between the muse of Byron and the muse of Sydney Dobell or Alexander Smith there is all the difference between a Joan of Arc in a moment of sublime and inspired enthusiasm and a housemaid roaring in a fit of hysterics on the sofa.

Perhaps *Firmilian* should be described rather as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the principles which are illustrated in the conception and execution of *Balder* than as what is usually termed a satire. The reputed author of Professor Aytoun's 'Spasmodic Tragedy' is T. Percy Jones, who, after the Dobellian and Smithian manner, disclaims in his preface the idea that he fears hostile criticism. 'So

far from entertaining an angry feeling towards the gentlemen who have noticed my work, I thank them for having brought me forward. . . . There has of late been much senseless talk "about schools of poetry," and it has been said, on the strength of the internal evidence afforded by some passages in my play, that I have joined the rank and upheld the tenets of those who belong to the Spasmodic school. I deny the allegation altogether. I belong to no school except that of nature, and I acknowledge the authority of no living master. But lest it should be thought that I stand in terror of a nickname, the general bugbear to young authors, I have deliberately adopted the epithet of Spasmodic, and have applied it in the title-page to my tragedy. It is my firm opinion that all high poetry is, and must be, spasmodic. Remove that element from *Lear*, from *Othello*, from *Macbeth*, from any of the great works which refer to the conflict of the passions, and what would be the residue? A mere *caput mortuum*. . . . I have been accused of extravagance; principally, I presume, on account of the moral obliquity of the character of Firmilian. To that I reply that the moral of a play does not depend upon the morals of any one character depicted in it, and thus many of the characters drawn by the magic pencil of Shakespeare are shaded as deep, or even deeper than Firmilian. Consider carefully the character of Hamlet, and you will find that he is very nearly as selfish as Firmilian. Hamlet is said to shadow forth constitutional irresolution; my object in Firmilian has been to typify "intellect without principle." . . . I am perfectly aware that this poem is unequal, and that some passages of it are inferior in interest to others. Such was my object; for I am convinced that there can be no beauty without breaks and undulation. I am not arrogant enough to assert that this is the finest poem which the age has produced; but I shall feel very much obliged to any gentleman who can make me acquainted with a better.'

This is a cruelly faithful imitation of the style of preface with which Mr. Sydney Dobell familiarised his readers. In the sequel, the characteristics of the Spasmodic bards are more directly and amusingly indicated. Firmilian is a student at Badajos, whose homicidal proclivities are intended to burlesque those of Balder. Haverillo is a poet, and Apollodorus is introduced as a critic. It is from the lips of these two that most of the sarcasms levelled at Mr. Dobell and his followers fall. Our young spirits, remark Haverillo,

'Who call themselves the masters of the age,
Are either robed in philosophic mist,
And, with an air of grand profundity,
Talk metaphysics—which, sweet cousin, means
Nothing but aimless jargon—or they come
Before us in the broad bombastic vein
With spasms and throes and transcendental flights,

And heap hyperbole on metaphor.

Well, Heaven be with them, for they do small harm ;
And I no more would grudge them their career
Than I would quarrel with a wanton horse
That rolls on Sundays in a clover field ;
Depend upon it, ere two years are gone
Firmilian will be wiser.'

we have an admirably humorous reproduction of the lyric verse,
which the *Roman*, *Balder*, and *A Life Drama* are relieved, as
follows :

'Down in the garden behind the wall
Merrily grows the bright green leek ;
The old sow grunts as the acorns fall,
The winds blow heavy, the little pigs squeak ;
One for the litter and three for the teat—
Hark to their music, Juanna, my sweet !'

Aytoun does not confine his satirical shafts to the Spasmodic
is. There are the authors of spasmodic prose as well ; and Mr.
Lyle is described as 'an Anabaptist, or something of the sort,
in the Low Countries, rejoicing in the name of 'Teufelsdröckh,'
whose ordinary talk is in this manner :

'Twas a tirade
About fire-horses, jötuns, windbags, owls,
Choctaws and horsehair, shams and sunkeyism,
Unwisdoms, tithes, and unverbatimies.
Faith, when I heard him railing in crank terms,
And dislocating language in his howl
At phantasm captains, hair and leather popes,
Terrestrial law-words, lords, and law-bringers,
I almost wish'd the graduate back again.'

The dénouement of the drama is the precipitation of Firmilian into
it. He has escaped from the Inquisitors, who have sat upon
his shortcomings in morals and his excesses in poetry, and is lured
to his own destruction by a chorus of *ignes fatui* singing :

'Stay, stay, stay,
This way, this way :
There's a pit before, and a pit behind,
And the seeing man walks in the path of the blind.'

Incomparably the best poetry of Mr. Sydney Dobell and Mr.
Randall Smith is to be found in their ballads and lyrical pieces.
The second scene of the *Life Drama* there is a burst of rare
poetry. I allude to the lines which commence 'In the street,' and
which a little later continue :

'To lose the sense of whirling streets 'mong breezy crests of hills,
Skies of larks, and hazy landscapes, with fine threads of silver rills ;
Stand with forehead bathed in sunset on a mountain's summer crown,
And look up and watch the shadow of the great night coming down ;

Give battle to the leaguèd world, if thou'rt worthy, truly brave.
Thou shalt make the hardest circumstance a helper or a slave.'

It is, I think, a legitimate inference from the published works of the two writers, that as Sydney Dobell had undoubtedly the richer gift of poetic delicacy and insight, so Alexander Smith's muse was constitutionally more robust. Vigour of diction, swing, and go there are indeed in almost all Mr. Dobell's ballads, some of which stir the heart as it were a trumpet; but in the published collection of those grouped together under the heading 'England in War-time' there rings forth scarcely a note such as one would look for from the lyre of a great and patriotic bard. In scene ix. of *Balder* there is a little poem introduced which combines the intensity of Browning in his short and earlier pieces with the freshness—a freshness that seems perfumed with the salt odour of the sea—of Dibdin. I must be allowed to quote two stanzas:

'The Betsy Jane did slack
To see the game in view;
They knew the Union Jack,
And the tyrant's flag we knew;
Our captain shouted "Clear the decks!" and the bosun's whistle blew
Then our gallant captain,
With his hand he seized the wheel,
And pointed with his stump to the middle of the foe:
"Hurrah, lads, in we go!"
You should hear the British cheer fore and aft.'

Mr. Sydney Dobell is represented to us by his friend and biographer, Mr. Nichol, as a patriot of no common order, and a man who sympathised most fervently with all national movements, all undertakings in which the national welfare was concerned. Mr. Nichol even speaks of his 'stirring sonnets on our Crimean struggle.' I can only say that I have looked for such compositions in the published collection of his works, and though I have looked long and carefully, have looked for them in vain. In lieu of stirring sonnets, I find a series of lachrymose chansons, dwelling, each and all of them, not upon the great national issues involved in the war, but upon the distressing influences of its tragic episodes on the home life in England. Mr. Dobell regards the bloody drama purely under what may be called its domestic aspect, and as the man who does not assume to be anything more than the poet of the hearth naturally would regard it. Thus he tells us of the woes of maidens whose lovers have fallen before the raking fire of the Russian guns, of wives left widows, of children who are fatherless. A more saddening strain a poet could not sing, and into it Mr. Dobell puts all the pathos of which his nature was capable, and his command of pathos was considerable. But there is nothing energising in them, nothing, indeed, which is not enervating; nothing which is calculated to cause

the sufferers to forget for a while their own sorrows in the consciousness of being the instruments of some supreme national good. There may be resignation sometimes; there is gloom always.

The defects in Mr. Sydney Dobell's ballads are his inordinate love for Scotticisms, which is an affectation, and his trick of perfectly meaningless repetition, which is an instance of that onomatopoeic tendency characteristic of the Spasmodic school. It is disagreeable to the reader to find words forced into strange contexts and writing in queer altitudes, in order that a certain impression may be conveyed to his material senses, but it becomes a positive nuisance when one has the same line recurring again and again. In his *Never too Late to Mend*, Mr. Charles Reade gave a sample of Australian poetry:

'By the Worra-Worra river I slew him,
I slew him by the Worra-Worra river;
By the river of Worra-Worra I slew him,
Him I slew by the Worra-Worra river.'

It is probable that if this stanza had been penned by Mr. Sydney Dobell, we should have been told a great deal by Mr. Nichol of the sublimity of its rhythmic effect. But Mr. Dobell has penned a great many stanzas of exactly the same kind. Thus in a poem, 'The Mother's Lesson,' of some two hundred and fifty lines, considerably more than three-fourths are mere echoes. For instance:

"D'ye min' when the bull had ye down, Willie?
D'ye min' when the bull had ye down?
D'ye min' wha grippit ye frae the big bull,
D'ye min' o' his muckle red wan?
D'ye min' o' his muckle red wan, Willie?
D'ye min' how the bluid down ran?
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie;
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man!"

Only an educated ear can see what is the special beauty of this endless and sickening iteration, or why what would be considered an abominable tautology if translated into good English is a poetic beauty when expressed in colloquial Scotch. Or take this:

'O the wold, the wold;
O the wold, the wold;
O the winter stark;
O the level dark;
O the wold, the wold, the wold!"

And so on for a page and a half. Mr. Nichol of course writes of Mr. Dobell as a friend, but it is impossible not to read his memoir without seeing that he is well aware of these radical weaknesses in the poetry of the author of *Balder*. Home education, we are told Sydney Dobell was not so much educated at home as not educated at all—'undoubtedly fosters the precocious forms of genius; but in

absence of social checks, it too often permits originality to degenerate into eccentricity. To the circumstance of the poet's early training may be traced many peculiarities of a mind never sufficiently influenced by the contact and friction of its equals. Innate benevolence of nature (*εὐφροία*) prevented this isolation in Mr. Dobell's case from manifesting itself as a moral, but it remained as an intellectual defect. . . He had all the reverence for superior wisdom which belongs to wisdom, but to ordinary criticism he remained singularly unamenable.' This is merely an amiable way of saying that Mr. Sydney Dobell was so completely intoxicated by the effusive adulation of the coterie in which he lived, and by the small critical clique which pronounced such inflated and ridiculous eulogies upon his early work, that he never recovered his intellectual balance. If Mr. Dobell had been subjected to auspices more favourable, if he had been possessed with a less prodigious idea of his own merits, he might have done much better work, and might have taken a lowly but respectable place in the second or third class of English poets. Instead he has probably given us nothing that will live ten years; nor can there be imagined a more unkindly stroke than the wholesale republication of his poetical remains. What was wanted was a selection, and I cannot help thinking that Mr. Nichol is of the same opinion, for in an 'introductory note' he disclaims all responsibility for any part of the work except the memoir.

T. H. S. ESCOTT.

A FATHER'S STORY

BY MARY CECIL HAY, AUTHOR OF 'OLD MYDDELTON'S MONEY,' ETC.

'There is no future pang
Can deal that justice on the self-condemn'd
He deals on his own soul.'

BYRON.

CHAPTER I.

A village, or, as the inhabitants call it, the town, of Free St. Dunstan's lies in the wildest, flattest, poorest, most unhealthy part of the country. Hardly any one not knowing Ireland could understand what a contrast is Free St. Dunstan's to one of our English villages. It is sprung up upon a rank and undrained bog. Its houses, built in straggling rows, are ill-ventilated, ill-lighted, low, and heavily pitched. There are some of them, lying back behind the village street, which it is real pain to me to enter; for when I stand in a low narrow doorway—which I fill—the little unwholesome chamber seems all in darkness, for the window, which cannot be opened, is patched with paper or rag of every shade. And there, haps, in a corner near the turf fire which smoulders on the ground, an old man or woman lies upon a heap of straw; the pig, or often donkey, which 'pays the rent,' stabled near enough for the two heads to be in contact over and over again. O, how unceasingly, during years I have toiled among these poor, have I prayed and longed for power to help them—power, as well as will and heart, to do so. What could I do, except try to teach them to love cleanliness and order? I think that only those who have laboured in such a parish can understand how hard that lesson was to teach to the listless, cheerful, idle Irish poor—so content to beg, when begging was allowable; so consistently avoiding regular work as long as possible; so ready to endure filth and destitution; so placid under reproof; so satisfied with a glass of whisky or a cup of tea in the midst of any poverty or uncleanness.

The one who *did* own the power which I envied—the one who *could* have done all I vainly longed to do—was the old Squire, Sir James Aghner, who owned the village and the bog, but lived a couple of miles away at least, on the shore of one of our most beautiful loughs. He rarely came among us, and when he did it was only to look up at the faulty tenant of whom his agent had complained. Year after year I urged my request upon him. I never thought I ought to cease waiting for the help my flock so sorely needed—for the purifying and draining of the village cabins; for the building and altering that

were really necessary to make the dwellings wholesome. But the old Squire always laughed and shrugged the matter away; and so from year to year we staggered on, as it were, only not going back; and sickness came among us very often, and death was horribly familiar.

Free St. Dunstan's is a different place now—I could not write this if it were not so; but even yet such villages as that was then lie festering under God's bright heaven. Ay, and in other close unwholesome cabins as in those I knew so well, amid the rank and sinful weeds which indifference and neglect have nourished, sound, pure, and spotless natures do their life's work well and bravely.

Perhaps gradually, as the years went on, and Clare and I worked among them, a little outward change was visible; but still the root of the foul weed was left, because we had not power to reach it.

My old appeals to the Squire had been renewed a hundred times, and unheeded a hundred times, when one day he fell down dead upon the lake shore, and his nephew and namesake inherited his title and property, which property proved much less than every one had imagined it to be.

'All the better,' young Sir Horace said to me, when I made that remark after the reading of the will—'the less the better, to have lain rusting all these years.'

I had known the new Squire since he was a boy. Whenever he came from his mother's home in Dublin to visit his uncle at St. Dunstan's Castle he had always stayed a night or two with us at the little vicarage, and we all loved him well. You may guess, then, that we were glad enough to hail him our landlord in his uncle's stead.

But almost immediately after the funeral he went to Italy with his invalid mother, who had been ordered there at once.

The spring came, and still he could not leave his mother, and she could not return. I think that the strong, tender, protecting love he bore his mother was what at first had won him such a deep place in our hearts—Clare's and mine. For were not we two all in all to each other? Could not we feel the deep and clinging tenderness which bound the parent to an only child, and the child to an only parent? To an only parent!—I have written the words now, and they shall stand. O, if they had been true, my love, in its courage, could have been daunted by no work or poverty, and I had brought no suffering on the life of my only child, who made the life that might have been so cramped and dull one long, bright, loving day for me.

The summer of Sir Horace Aghner's absence was the hottest which I had known for fifteen years, and life at Free St. Dunstan's was almost unbearable. I used to gaze into Clare's little brave, pale face, and long with an unspeakable longing to take her away; but our work was there, and there were other reasons to prevent the possibility of our leaving home too—reasons which my darling could

press at, though she never whispered that she wished to leave bank and glaring bog on which our tiny house was built. It was of the hottest mornings of this hot summer, and I felt my eyes dim and heavy, and my hand weak, as I wrote on persistently indefatigably. No heat nor fatigue must be allowed to stay on when each page I wrote helped me a little in the one long effort of my life.

As I wrote on, staying only a moment now and then to drink of the glass of water beside me, Clare came in to me, with her hat in her hand. When she stood beside my desk, and laid one coaxing arm on mine, I put down my pen, glad as I always was of such an interruption, and looked up into her face—the face so gently earnest, so delicately bright.

Are you going out into this shadeless noonday heat, my dear?

Yes, papa; and I want a little port to take to old Tim O'Flaherty; I want to know, before I go, what the papers say about the fra. Is it coming towards us?

I did not answer, for Clare had taken a newspaper from the table, and was reading it attentively.

O, father!' she cried, raising her sad young eyes to mine, 'it is within ten miles of us. If it comes here—just think of it, father! think of it entering our poor unwholesome houses. It would sweep through the village with a breath. Is there anything we can do that we have not done?—anything, father, to stay this awful plague?'

My dear,' I said, trying to make light of it, because I saw my daughter so pained, 'we have done, and we are doing, all we can. Don't you know that "to fly the bear before the bear pursue were to incense the bear to follow us"?'

You are trying to turn the subject away, papa, but I know you are as anxious as I am; and I think of it and fear it every hour of the day and night. Why do you turn the thought aside?

I cannot bear to see you worry yourself, my pet; I can bear to see you worry better than that, I think.'

I wish—I hope you will never have anything worse to bear than these worries, papa,' she said, with a little smile, which could not take away the deep earnestness from her words, and which I sorrowfully remembered afterwards.

Clare, dear, I have not any more wine for Tim,' I said regretfully. 'I found this morning that my store was gone. I will replace it as soon as I can. You must take him a little money. Hold the lid of this desk up, while I look for a little packet of which I put here.'

I wish Sir Horace would come home, papa; don't you?' Clare said, as she stood beside me, supporting the lid of my desk, while

I searched among the papers. 'I wish you would write to him, and tell him how the people need his help just now. He would be most ready to give it; he always was, as far as he could. And—and I think he will be glad for you to tell him. Will you write?'

I had just given the promise, when her eyes fell upon a faded ribbon lying in an inner drawer which I had opened.

'Papa,' she said, her voice very soft, her eyes very bright and pleading, 'will you give me some memento of my mother—something, above all, that she has worn? I have nothing to whisper to me of the mother whom I never knew.'

'Some day, dear child, some day,' I said, closing the desk rather hastily, and not telling Clare that the faded ribbon was one which she had taken from her hair to tie around my neck one day when she was but a tiny child.

'It has always troubled me, father,' continued Clare, almost in a whisper, as she laid her gentle hand on my arm, 'to think that in the church, where week after week we are together, there should be no monument to my mother's memory. I know she lies far away in England, and I know that *you* need nothing to recall her memory to you; but then I think—I fancy she would like to feel that *her* name, as well as her memory, is there among us. I have wished this for such a long, long time, father. Perhaps—perhaps presently, when Sir Horace is at home, and our people are better cared for, we shall be able to afford it.'

'Perhaps so, dear; we will wait and see,' I said, without any sign of haste or nervousness, though when my child was gone I paced the little silent room with hot rebellious thoughts which I could not crush.

'If you please, sir, Blake says he would not leave this letter this morning as he could not see you, because there is a paper for you to sign; so he went his rounds first, and has brought it now. Will you sign the paper now, sir?'

I took up the letter with listless hands as the maid left the room, but when I read the address my whole thoughts changed, and I opened it with a glad expectant smile—a smile which brightened, too, when there fell from the envelope an enclosure addressed to Clare. But if I were glad to see the address, how doubly glad I was to read the letter! Glad, as Clare's father, to read of Sir Horace's love for her; glad, as the shackled minister of a poor and suffering parish, to read of the help which was heartily and earnestly given me.

'I had hoped,' Sir Horace said, on the last page of the closely-covered sheet of foreign letter-paper, 'to be at home myself before this summer, but my mother cannot venture to travel yet. The steady progress which this terrible disease is now making in Ireland gives me constant anxiety, because I know so well how little pre-

pared the people of Free St. Dunstan's are to keep it out of their dwellings. I wish the enclosed cheque were for double a hundred pounds, and had been sent you sooner; but I have had so many unlooked-for debts of my uncle's to settle, that I have been a good deal straitened ever since I left England. I know how well and wisely you will use what I have sent. You remember how we used to plan those draining and ventilating matters together long ago, and by the time the worst and hardest part of the work is completed I hope to send more, even if I cannot—as I long to do—pleading it myself, and pleading my cause myself with Clare. In the mean time, dear Mr. O'Byrne, do let me have a line from you to inform me that you too will plead my cause; that you are willing to place your only child, your darling, into my care—my tender loving care. I think you have known for a long time how I love her. I always felt that you guessed my secret—the secret I have told her to in my letter. I might, you will say, have waited until I returned to Ireland, but the fact is I long selfishly for an answer from her. I long to hear from her own heart that I may hope until I see her. I do not think the suspense would be hard at all, because my love makes me so happy, but I find I am not so brave as I fancied; and I hope and trust that I may hear from my darling before I come to you, as I shall do so gladly as soon as my mother's health permits.'

I read the letter again and again. If I had been Clare herself, and had loved him as she loved him, I could not have read his words with greater pride and gratitude. Then I put it, with the cheque which I indorsed at once, into my desk; and fixed Clare's letter on the chimneypiece, so that the address might meet her eye as soon as she entered the room.

Before I sat down again I went out into the hall, and came in to see how it struck me, and to picture to myself how her eyes would brighten and the pink flush in her cheeks when she saw it.

My darling! how natural it seemed to me that she should have won this rich abundant love, which Sir Horace told me of so humbly and so proudly! Every few minutes I raised my eyes from my writing to satisfy myself that the letter was there just ready for Clare's glance to fall upon, that it had not mysteriously slipped so that it could not meet my darling's happy eyes; and every time I went back to my task really brightened and strengthened by the light—we old men can be such utter children now and then.

My morning task was nearly at an end, and my ears were straining expectantly for Clare's step, when my study-door was opened, and a woman came in to me unannounced, and sat down on Clare's low chair.

I pushed the heavy gray hair from my face, battling with the crushed and hopeless feeling which I knew so well, and then I saw

and been always generous friends of mine turned their backs on me? Was it not your fault that I had to seek a scanty means of livelihood here—here, where for years we have had no friends and no companions? Was it not your fault that I was led on to be a coward in submitting to you, and being tempted to wrong my child—'

'Our child,' put in the woman surlily.

'To wrong my child,' I continued, too sad to heed her words, and to take from her every penny which I could scrape for you; to rob her of what I can never replace, though I work here night as well as day—most at night, sitting here unknown to her through dreary, dreary hours, without fire on the bitterest December nights; working on unceasingly after the hardest day's work? *Replace it!*' I cried, drawing my hand wearily across my damp brow. 'How could I ever replace it, if I worked every minute of my life, when it haunts me and drags from me, by your threats or your disgrace, the little that I earn for her? O God, are there ever rare hours when you can think and feel what you have done? Not for me—I will not speak of that again, for—God help me that I cannot say I have deserved it!—He giving me patience I will keep the resolution I have made, and never tempt you to utter the words of untruth you uttered when I told you that before—, but for her.'

'You take enough care of her; you see to that yourself,' she answered roughly.

'My life with her seems often to me nothing but one long falsehood,' I said wearily. 'I hate myself, I wish this miserable life at an end—O, sorely I wish it!—when she speaks of her dead mother. Could I ever tell her the truth? My God! could I live to see the great, great wondering, pitying question in her face?'

'The very natural and commonplace question, *why did you marry her, eh?*' questioned the woman.

'Never mind,' I answered drearily. 'It is a question which I dare not hear, and the answer would be a sorrow which I dare not see upon my darling's face. Need we say more to-day? I have got the money you want. Is not that sufficient answer for you?'

'You can get it,' my wife said shortly. 'I will wait while you get it. I fancy you will find it before midnight. If not, all the better. I shall have a comfortable night's rest here; it is better than that miserable little tavern in the village. Besides, I shall see my girl again.'

'You know the consequence of your forcing your presence upon her,' I said, with a voice of concentrated passionate anger. 'You know the publicity of disgrace which you will bring upon yourself—do not say upon us, for you would care little for that. No plea you can urge after that, no oath you swear to me after that, shall stop me in winning a legal and entire separation. Of what avail will your demands be then? Once break the compact between us,

the shaking hand the envelope which she held towards me as she spoke, and the words refusing to come from my white stiff lips.

'Well, finish your sentence,' she said, laughing coarsely. 'You are a clever hypocrite—you always were. So that silver was all you did? What a lucky thing I did not believe you!'

'That money is not mine—not one farthing of it is mine!' I said.

'No, not any longer,' she said; 'I call it mine instead. And I will go now. I need not waste any more time here; and to-morrow I will see me in Dundalk.'

'You dare not go with that in your possession,' I exclaimed, grasping her hand with all my shaking fingers—'you dare not!'

'Loose me!' she grumbled. 'Let me go quiet; it will be better for you.'

'Never! I will never let this dishonesty be committed in my house. That money is given in trust to me.'

'Well, and you have not stolen it,' was the quick reply. 'It has been stolen from your room. What more need you know about it? Let me go!'

'Never!' I cried, a world of agony in my feeble voice. 'I would rather have the police to track you; I would rather all the world should know my shame!'

'Very well,' she returned, with savage obstinacy, as she turned back to the table; 'then I will stay and tell the story to Clare. A big story it is, rather, but she will stop to listen. The very novelty will hold her. I will tell some one else too—I have his address here in the letter. I will tell him this story too. I have read enough to know what he aims at, and he will be pretty thankful to me for telling him this story in time. He will not think it too long either in his relief that he has been rescued from a marriage with the granddaughter of one of the most notorious gamblers and forgers in England, and a daughter of mine. O, how laughable! A daughter of mine, when he had me taken before the magistrates last time I was about here lying in wait for you! I have not forgotten the grave and sort of reprimand he gave me, and which I listened to because I knew I could get him to help me a bit on my road afterwards. And I daresay he has not forgotten me either, and will be surprised to hear I am his vicar's lawful wife—the mother of the wife he wishes to win. Cannot you fancy you see his surprise, his high-bred scorn and contempt? Ah! you shiver and grow white, like the ward you always were. Let me go! How can you help robbers getting into your study, when the window is open and the cheque on your desk? Let me go! I hate this place heartily—so heartily that you have only to stand aside now, and you will never see me again. I have no wish,' she added, with a sickening cunning smile, 'to stop the marriage of Sir Horace Aghner with your daughter.'

ter. I shall only be obliged to do it if you try to keep from your lawful wife the little bit of money which would take her safely and comfortably away beyond the seas for ever, and prevent her feeling obliged to make your unfortunate story known to the young baronet, who they say prides himself—as all your baronets do—on the purity of his descent, and to our own daughter, and so separating them before marriage instead of leaving them to separate after, as we did. He will soon forget her, most likely,’ she added, watching with keen and cruel eyes the fear that ached in mine. ‘The girl is likely enough to break her heart, I suppose—girls sometimes do for such as he—but if she does it will not be anything to fret over. It will spare her just such a wreck of a life perhaps as her mother’s.’

‘O, hush!’ I cried, with a throbbing agony in my twitching lips. ‘You cannot do this!’

‘I can—I will. I swear it!’ she answered, with a fierce and desperate decision. ‘Not a word or sign of your hypocritical grief or your cowardly fear shall move me. It never has, as you know, so why should it now?’

‘O, my God!’ I cried, and raised my hands to shut out the face before me, ‘it cannot be, it cannot be! It would kill me.’

‘The disgrace of tracking me, the death of Clare in her love-sickness, or even the contempt and disdain of Sir Horace, may kill you,’ she said, with cruel carelessness; ‘but it will not kill you to have to tell a rich young landowner that a hundred pounds of his property has been stolen by an undiscovered thief. *That* could not kill you if you were the baby you behave like. Now am I to go, or am I to wait to see my daughter? How helpless you stand there, when one word of yours can decide it all!’

‘I cannot,’ I moaned, and I thought my heart was breaking, as I covered my aching tired eyes. ‘I cannot let that go; it is to save my people.’

‘To save yourself, you mean,’ she laughed abruptly, ‘and to leave everything quiet and peaceful for you as it never was before; to take me so far away that you need never fear another visit from me. Now one word. Am I to go or stay?’

‘Go, go,’ I whispered in a voice Clare could never have recognised—a voice which I knew must sound like the voice of a dying man, round whose fevered pillow spirits of darkness struggled and fought, and shut out from him every glimpse of heaven.

In another minute she was gone, and alone in the silent room I stood and faced the past. Dark as that past was, shadowed by the clouds of my own suffering and the sins of others, it was still easier, in this bitter hour, to face that than the future, cloud-shadowed too, but, O, so much heavier because the suffering would be my child’s, and the sin had been my own—all my own, as I repeated to myself again and again, in my hot and agonised self-condemnation.

Ah, how many years was it since I had lived in a world unclouded, since I had been led by this woman's father to seek her for my wife—led and tempted to think I loved her by plausible falsehoods, which shine out to me now in words of fire from the darkness of the years between? A whole lifetime, surely—a whole long lifetime; for I was young and hopeful then, and had not this heavy weight of white hair on my brow. How many years was it since I had first known her to be what she really was? A whole life even that was, for Clare was lying in her arms a tiny unconscious infant—thank God, unconscious! And how long was it since my wife's father had thrown off his mask, and—because he had married his daughter to a rich man, as he supposed, and found the riches were taken from him—shown himself the villain he was, and began the long secret robbery which had made my life almost like a living death? A long, long time, for Clare was a woman now—my little Clare, my darling, my one tie to work and to life and to hope—my child, for whose sake this secret had been kept so jealously. Would it have been better to have braved it all at first? 'Ah, no, no,' I moaned, picturing my darling's face of innocent happiness and calm purity. She would return to me soon. I must chase these miserable thoughts away.

What would the bright eyes say when they caught sight of the letter up there?

A sudden swift pain ran through my heart as I looked up to where I had put it. What if Sir Horace had told Clare of the cheque he sent me? Would his tale of love fill all that paper? It might—O, if it would! But suppose—

Not allowing myself a moment to hesitate, or even think of what I was going to do, I took the letter down, and opened it with fingers that did not seem like my own.

If it said nothing I would give it to her opened; if not—

I glanced through it, and could hardly distinguish the lines, my eyes were so hot and smarting.

When at last I could see the words, I read them steadily. O, what a tale of love they told! How Clare's heart would throb with a newer, sweeter life when she read these words, which I dare not follow to the end!

O, my heart stopped beating as I read, for Sir Horace began now to tell her gladly of the help he was going to send me. He told her he knew her father would make the best and wisest use of his poor hundred pounds, and that he knew, too, how tenderly and lovingly she would help him. He told her that the plans which he had made among us months before could be carried out now. That he hoped this would lighten a little even *her* labours among the people to whom she was ever good and generous, as well as spare them suffering.

He told her how grieved he was that he could not yet return as he wished to do, and how, when he did do so, he hoped to be able to complete the work which he trusted his gift would begin.

No other word could I read. I locked the letter hastily in my desk, for Clare could not see it. I covered for a moment my smarting eyes, fearing my child would read at a glance the agony that burned within them. In another minute the study-door was opened, and Clare's face—anxious a little, and a little pale—was raised to mine.

'Papa, why do you look so sad? I wish I had not left you at all.'

'My dear, I cannot always have you with me; such luxury is not for me.'

'Hush'—she began, but I interrupted her.

'You look sad too, my darling. Have you had anything to make you so?'

'I have been hearing one or two sad tales, but I generally do, papa, and—'

'Yes, pet; and what?'

'Nothing, except that I was thinking as I walked home across the bog, how utterly helpless one is without money. Does it not sound mercenary; but—but how is one to do what one wants to do without money? And I—'

'Yes, and you?' I questioned hurriedly, as if eager to turn from that other thought.

'O, I was only wishing that Sir Horace were at home, because he could help us.'

'Did the cabins seem poorer and more comfortless than usual, darling?' I asked, with a nervous effort to conceal my dread of her coming words.

'I think they did,' she said regretfully, 'and the people more timid, and—almost discontented. So was it a wonder, papa, that I caught myself wishing for Sir Horace's return to help and cheer them? Do you think,' she mused, her eyes wide and wistful, 'that he will write to you soon?'

'No, no; why should he write to me?' I asked hastily; 'why should he write to me?'

'You are harassed, father,' Clare whispered very gently. 'I would not have spoken of it, if I had remembered just at that moment how anxious you are for his return and assistance now. One cannot explain these fancies, but I had fancied he would write to you. Now come to dinner, please, and do not be anxious and troubled, father dear. You always do your best, and I try to do mine. We leave the rest in hands that are always merciful and pitiful, do we not?'

CHAPTER II.

SLOWLY the days passed on until a month was gone, and the weariness of hope deferred gathered and deepened on my darling's face morning after morning when the letters came, and she looked in vain for Sir Horace Aghner's writing. Yet always afterwards she would turn to me with a cheerful smile struggling with her disappointment, and say a few bright words, as if she felt my disappointment must be greater than her own. And these words, uttered so bravely in patience, haunted me through the day when we had separated our work among the people.

Such sad and anxious work it was, for the cholera had come among us now, hurrying on from cabin to cabin, and on his track Death marched steadily. How brave Clare was through that time! With all my striving and praying for strength to help her, my power to soothe, my strength and power were never as hers.

The deadly epidemic swept on across the bog unstayed and unrelenting, and every day I stood beside an open grave, and felt—Oh, how keenly!—that I myself had caused the mourners' tears and anguish. Would not Sir Horace Aghner's gift, and the carrying out of his wise plans, have warded off this terrible scourge? If it had been prepared, it would not have made this havoc among us. But these thoughts I fought with as if they had been murderous, because I knew they would unfit me for my work.

Morning, evening, and night, Clare sat beside the sick and dying; moving about the dreary little kitchens, providing and caring for motherless children; or cheering and encouraging the strong, or smitten suddenly helpless by the horror which had left that one vacant on the hearth; or she would gently carry out of sight the empty cot beside the mother's bed: while I—always bearing the terrible weight of my own sin—felt its punishment sometimes more than I could bear in silence, while I watched her still and so brave.

Only on rare occasions now did Clare and I sit together in the inner evenings—we two alone as we had loved to sit—and when we did we rested in utter silence, just as if each feared to speak of it might pain the other; and these unfrequent hours were the only rest which in this time we could know. But from these hard self-condemning thoughts of mine I never had a rest at all.

'Father,' whispered Clare, one morning as we stood beside the pile of straw on which a young man, big and powerfully made, lay in the iron clasp of the fell disease,—'father, does it bewilder you when you try to understand how these things can be? But for his mother's tears he would now have been in the New World, active and strong, and happy perhaps; but for our poverty we might have saved

him ; and now—and the mother's grave hardly closed. But I suppose, father,' she added, with that brave patience in her eyes which so often rebuked my cowardice, 'I suppose that the sudden and wonderful change from a life of poverty and care and toil to the brilliant beauty of the glorious Home which awaits us—I suppose that moment equalises all.'

Beyond the hard work, the sleepless nights, the constant confinement in close rooms, and the fear, something else was telling sadly upon Clare, and I knew well what this was.

'You have written to Sir Horace Aghner?' she would sometimes ask me, pretending she had forgotten whether she had asked me before; and when I said—with truth, though I hated myself for the words—that I had written long ago, she would smile wistfully as she wondered whether he had received my letter.

But gradually she gave up speaking of this, growing calmer and calmer, more and more patient, as I became more restless. It seemed as if some ever-present overpowering anxiety was slowly eating my life away. But one day—I know I shall never forget that day—Clare asked me for help for a poor sick woman, left a widow in the night, and when I told her, what I had hoped I might hide from her for a while, that I had no more to give, she hid her face suddenly in both her hands, and sobbed as if the pent-up agony of weeks had broken loose at last.

And I couldn't comfort her. I only felt as if nothing that I had had to bear through all my life could have been so hard as to see my darling's agonising tears. 'Clare, my child,' I said, my weak voice broken in its entreaty, 'hush, hush; perhaps we have borne it all now. Surely we two shall soon be at rest like the others.'

Her sobs—each one that shook her slight frame piercing my very heart—were hushed by one strong effort, and my darling looked up at me, her eyes brave and wistful through the tears.

'Not, I pray God, till our work is finished, father. Would they not be more desolate, more helpless, and poorer still without us?'

And from that day Clare never wept before me, but in her silent sorrow, as the long-deferred hope grew harder and harder to bear, she clung to me with a piteous childlike dependence which she had never shown even through all her childhood. And I noticed now that her untasted food was always put away to be carried to some famishing child, and indeed, though I strove so hard to persuade her to eat, it was but a sorry pretence for both of us; and so it was comforting sometimes to see the hungry poor enjoying what we could not touch.

CHAPTER III.

'Will you go quickly, please, sir, as she was near dying when the messenger left the tavern?'

'The Orange Flag, a little inn upon the Dundalk road? I know it. I will go at once.'

I walked hastily the five miles of glaring highway which lay between Free St. Dunstan's and the Orange Flag, and I reached the roadside tavern worn and jaded. The landlord led me to a substantial old barn which lay back in a field, answering my questions on the way.

'She was found this morning at dawn, sir, lying on the road a little farther on; moaning, as we at first fancied in her sleep, that she had been robbed in Dundalk of one hundred pounds. Why that idea—it could only have been a delirious fancy, I expect—should bring her back towards Free St. Dunstan's I can't make out; but it seemed as if she was trying to come to tell you this, just as if she fancied you could help her about the robbery she was raving of. She doesn't look a very likely one to have a hundred pounds about her, but she kept muttering that you would know, and could stop it. Just as if you, sir, at Free St. Dunstan's could stop money stolen in Dundalk! I don't expect you'll find her alive now, sir; they told me she was going off fast an hour ago.'

Robbed in Dundalk—of a hundred pounds! Coming to tell me of it that I might stop it! Could I stop Sir Horace Aghner's cheque?

How the questions haunted me as I stood in the barn, gazing down upon my wife's haggard face!

'Too late for her to know you, I fear, sir,' said the kindly-hearted woman of the house, lingering for an instant to speak with me in the infected air; 'but we sent because the poor thing seemed so anxious to see you. The cholera evidently overtook her as she was walking towards Free St. Dunstan's.'

'Have you searched for any clue as to who she is?' I asked, each word faltering on my lips. 'If not, I will look myself.'

I think she saw how my fingers trembled while I felt my wife's dress. I know she saw how white and faint I grew, for she hastened to fetch me a glass of wine before she went away, and left us two alone.

No cheque, no paper at all, no clue in anything to name or address.

As I turned again in my misery to the hastily-made bed on which my wife lay, she opened her eyes, and for a minute gazed into my face.

'Robbed!' she faltered, almost incoherently; 'robbed of—'

I laid my fingers softly on her lips. The moments were too few and precious now to be spent so.

'You can easily say it now,' she went on with a great effort, 'that the cheque was stolen, and perhaps you may get it back. I was coming to tell you, and to frighten you into giving me more, when this came upon me. Go on praying if you like; it's as good to listen to as anything else.'

The cheque had been stolen, and I was using every means in my power to trace it.

I could tell Sir Horace Aghner that, for the words were true—true as far as words went. Through the long walk home, through the sleepless night, and through the day of that poor funeral (which I had not power to make less poor) the words haunted me. I must write them to Sir Horace—write and post them hastily, that it might be too late for me to change my decision.

But I did not write them; and as post after post came in, and brought no tidings, I had still to witness Clare's speechless pain.

Yet she was always my bright child, my ever-ready counsellor and helper, even my hopeful comforter, till that one miserable August evening.

I had been reading the burial service over one of our little ones—a happy child, who twenty-four hours before had run beside me over the spot where I had laid her. It was late on in the calm summer twilight when I entered the little hall at home, and called Clare. I always did so, yet seldom now expected the ready reply. None came to-day, and I went wearily on into the silent bright little room where tea stood on the table, and where Clare's work lay about as she had left it before she went out in the morning.

She had been hemming new white sheets for the little one whom I had just laid in her last bed, and I felt my eyes grow dim as I moved them aside.

Though we so often took our meals separately now, I felt an unaccountable depression when I saw the servant bring in the urn without waiting for Clare, and set my solitary chair.

'Miss O'Byrne has not returned yet?' I asked, as lightly as I could.

'She's lying down, sir. I was to call her to tea when you returned, but I thought, perhaps, it would be better not.'

'I will go myself,' I answered; but my heart sank so in my unspeakable fear that I knew my words were only a whisper.

Though I opened her bedroom door so softly, she started up when she saw me, and pushed her hair from her pained face.

'Tea-time, father?' she asked, with a little wan smile into my eyes; 'I am ready. I was a little tired, and I thought I would rest till you came. I am so glad we are going to have tea together again. It will be like old times. You won't mind if I come down as I am, will you? putting up my hair is such a trouble.'

With one swift glance into her face I saw the truth. Had I gone from bed to bed with the terrible plague for so long without being quick to recognise its touch? I held my child to my heart clingly as I had held her once twenty years before—the tiny infant who was the only treasure left me in the world—and my wrung heart cried—shrieked to Heaven for pity on us both.

Then I left directions with the servant, and I myself ran—ay, as I was, ran like a schoolboy—for the doctor, who lived two miles away, and had, only half an hour ago, left the village, thinking his day's work there was over.

All that night he spent with me beside my child, and I felt that this must be the last, as it was the hardest, of the many struggles of my life. What, had I not known that day after day and night after night spent in the impure and ill-drained dwellings would kill my child? Why had I not taken her away? Duty and work! What were they in comparison to my darling's life—the life which was passing so fast? How long should I be left behind? Ah, could I ever win a place beside her again?—I who, though I knelt beside her, carried an unacknowledged falsehood on my lips and in my heart; I who had killed her by my sin!

In the awful hush of our waiting and our fear I wrote to Sir Horace Aghner, and told him all the truth. I told him how his gift had been abused, when it would have saved the lives of so many of our people. I told him why my child was dying now of the terrible disease with which she had so bravely fought for others, and of sorrow and disappointment. I told him how I had kept back his letter to her, and that it was too late to give it her, for she could never understand it. God knows I did not, in that awful night, make my darkness less dark; and the words I wrote were blotted with hot tears. Then I begged him, for Clare's sake, to come, because it might not yet be too late for his voice to reach her; and after that the words dragged heavily, always to that one anxious, frightened cry, which must have echoed as a prayer among the arches of heaven, 'Will he be in time? Can he be in time?'

'If she had been well and strong when the disease attacked her,' Dr. Elliot said to me as the days went on, and Clare lay still unconscious in her agony, 'I could have bidden you entertain some hope, but I feel that I dare not. Nature was so utterly exhausted. She must be prepared for the worst.'

And then I found that all the sorrows of a lifetime cannot teach me to be prepared for the worst.

'If she would only know me,' I moaned, gazing into the vacant eyes; 'if she would only understand me while I confess all to her, and then if I could hear her forgive me! If only Sir Horace would come, that she might look upon his face before she died! Then I could bear to see the end before I shrink away from his presence.'

White and still in the whiteness and stillness of the summer twilight Clare lay, gazing at me at last with a gathering consciousness in her wide dim eyes.

'If,' whispered Dr. Elliot, watching her anxiously, 'if she awakes through the night—'

If she lingered through the night—through one short swift—

flying night! I heard no other word. I reeled from the bedside, blind and helpless, covering my face as the sobbing cry passed my lips, 'Will he be in time? O my God, let him be in time!'

The twilight deepened, and I sat alone at my watch. I was glad Dr. Elliot could not stay. I could not have borne this anxiety unless I had had to bear it alone with my God. At dawn he was to come again, and I longed for, yet dreaded it: longed for the hope he *might* give; dreaded the words of certain doom which he might utter—which I felt sure he *must* utter, because he had said, 'By morning she will, I think, have ceased to suffer.'

Was it nearly daylight now? Was the agony nearly lived through?

'Father'—the low weak voice pierced me like a sword—'father, kiss me. I have seen you near me, I have never missed you. I want you to talk to me of how my mother died—that will help me.'

My white lips were on my darling's, when I heard a long soft rapping at the outer door.

'I will be back in one minute, love,' I said.

'Don't leave me, father,' she murmured faintly. 'We have been always together, and it is so strange to me. I am entering the valley, father. O, stay and talk to me of the Home beyond.'

But I went. Not to hide the anguish that her words caused me, but because I felt a sudden hope leap up within me. Straight in to me from the dusky summer night came Sir Horace Aghner, his grave face deadly pale, his breath quick and hard. He did not speak to me one word—did I not feel that he could never utter word to me again?—but he did take my hand for a moment before I led him to my darling's room.

At the door I suddenly paused. 'I will tell her,' I faltered, and left him there while, in low broken whispers, I told her who waited to see her.

There came a smile upon the wan wasted lips, but no surprise, no question. I knew it was too late for that. Then, unable even to prepare him for the change he would see, I signed to Sir Horace to go in; and I crept away even from the door—away into the darkness. What right had I among them when I had blighted both their lives?

I never knew how the hours passed until I saw the soft fair August dawn breaking above the distant level line of bog. And then Dr. Elliot came. When he saw me for the first time away from Clare's room, his one quick thought showed plainly on his face. I could not deceive him, and he entered Clare's room, treading softly with the step of one who enters the chamber of death. Still I stood without, cold and tremulous upon the threshold, and I thought that some whole lives had only held the agony of those few minutes while I felt that my only child was passing through the val-



Arthur Lumley, del.

"THERE IS ROOM

ley, as she had said, and I was shut out here, by my own sin against her, and against him who had the best right to be with her now.

I remembered how she had said, beside another death-bed, that the sudden and wonderful change to the brilliancy of the glorious Home which awaits us in one moment equalises all inequalities here.

Was she even now entering this glorious Home? Ah, what a thought while I stood without, helpless and powerless! Suddenly, yet very softly and tenderly, my raised clasped hands were taken in Sir Horace's, and he bent to speak to me with gentle grave anxiety.

'Clare is wondering where you are; is longing to see you. Dear old friend, why leave the loving watch which you have held so long?'

'Was it—was it—does she know you? Was it too late?'

'Not too late. She knows me,' he answered, his words low and sad, but not broken and incoherent like mine. 'Not too late; and, please God, she will be spared.'

The words of hope, uttered so kindly by the voice which should have condemned me, the pitying glance of the eyes which should have hated to look upon me, unmanned me now that the terrible doubt and suspense were over; and, in my great and new-born hope, and in my utter weakness, I fell fainting to the ground, swallowed up as it were in a great sudden darkness.

The torturing fever in which I lay through all that autumn time has passed now, and my heart is calm and untroubled, as I never thought that it could be again. But I know that my tired feet are slowly treading the valley from which Clare came back to us on that summer morning nearly a year ago. Every luxury surrounds me now; every care is lavished upon me. My daughter's tender watchful love and her husband's strong and gentle comfort and support make the way smooth for me; but still it is the way through the valley to the Home beyond; and, if I might, I would not have it otherwise.

Last night I went from our beautiful home here on the lough shore to preach my last sermon in the church on the bog—the last sermon which I may ever preach. After it was over, and the people, whom I have learnt to love, had all dispersed, I watched Clare, standing below the marble tablet which at last hangs there with her mother's name upon it—only the name.

'There is room for one other,' I said; 'I would like only the name too. Will you promise to put nothing more?'

Horace promised what I asked, seeing how earnestly I wished it; but Clare's eyes were wet and wistful, and she clung to my arm as she used to do in those old days when we two were all the world to each other.

But I know now that, even without the name upon the marble, they will remember me always, and even love my memory, too, in spite of all.

OXFORD RAFFLES

No. IV.

UNDER the exalting influence of reform the University of Oxford is reported to have developed three p's, viz. prudery, priggishness, propriety. According to the perverted intelligence of the writer, it needs but to add to the above 'papa, potatoes, prunes, and prism,' in order to convert the old place into one gigantic New Inn Hall, the ancient nomenclature whereof was 'The Site of the Seven Deadly Sins.' This by the way. No doubt civilisation and brain-power both progress. There are fogeys, however, still existent who prefer the one clad in cleanly raiment, who dislike the other under a pot-hat. Besides which, in the old days, when men were more careful of their appearance, and perhaps attached a greater importance to apologeticism, the Bosporei were not all pignies. There were giants then to be found on the banks of Cherwell and Isis; and although Pharisees for the most part, believing in the Christian religion and napkins at dinner, to say nothing about washing hands and fingernails out of mourning, they showed as well to the fore in the big race for fame as your tatterdemalion Sadducee of to-day can possibly, though he may read all the hair off his head, and grind every particle of marrow out of his backbone.

The following relates to a period antecedent to University reform; when, to use the civil language of contemporary democracy, Oxford was bloated, idiotic, bestial—albeit at that very moment supplying the nation with a galaxy of talent in Church and State, in science and in literature.

A truce, however, to this *laudatio temporis acti*. After all, our narration is not concerned with the good boys of a past cycle, with the Gladstones, Newmans, Fabers, Mannings, Wilberforces, and the rest of the Walballa. They, in their prominence, are doubtless very picturesque; but, as Dumas the younger lays down in his admirable canon of fiction, they do not dramatise at all well. Mrs. Macbride, the wife of the fine old chief of defunct Magdalen Hall, whose hospitable doors were always thrown open to supernaturally good undergrads, exclaimed on one occasion, when the surrounding atmosphere had become so very pure as to be uncomfortably rarefied, 'For pity's sake, Mac, don't ask any more good ones here! I like the wicked ones.' Our notion coincides somewhat with that of the sprightly dame. At all events, we write *virginibus puerisque*, not for prunic young paragons or prismatic maidens, and those who dis-

love can at their discretion fall back upon their bi-monthly for intellectual, upon their vivisector's vade-mecum for scientific, diversion. Our rôle is the t'other thing.

To shunt then, without farther preface, down the line. Mr. Covey of St. Benedict's had somehow, after nearly five years of academical residence, come to sleeves, or, in other words, had taken his degree. How he became possessed of the gown with the long appendages was a mystery. The trick was not done by reading. That was certain. It doesn't much signify, however, in this beautiful world of ours how you succeed, so long as you avoid failure. We will, therefore, after the manner of the Stagyrte, take a fact for our starting-point. Mr. Covey, at the time we commence our little history, was as much B.A. as Charles Dickens' Mr. Feeder. Let that suffice. The status, nevertheless, of baccalaureate, though it confers many negative sweets, such as release from examinations, lectures, and chapels, by way of proving that ugly universal law of compensation, hedges its roses with thorns and sticks a wasp in every honeysuckle. Not to put too fine a point upon a couple of trite metaphors, the thorns and wasps represent certain lowering tradesmen of Oxford, who are apt to exhibit an abnormal fondness for the purses of newly-fledged B.A.s.

Now Mr. Covey, B.A., in plain unvarnished English, owed a cap of money. He was very handsome. He had lived in the *côte de la crème* of Oxford society. Some men plunge, trusting to the buoyancy of such swimming apparatus as may have been provided by parents or guardians. Mr. Covey had taken his bader without so much as a cork in his belt to keep his nose above water. In those days, too, a vindictive creditor could incarcerate his victim for an entire lifetime. The law was merciless, and the ill-farred wight who got into its tigerish clutches had better by far have committed treason, if not bigamy.

Towards the middle of the summer term it began to be telegraphed from mouth to mouth that Covey of St. Benedict's couldn't pay.

'I don't believe as how he haven't got not a brass farden,' growled Gripe the livery-stable man.

'No, nor me neither,' echoed Snippins the tailor.

'Shell the shentleman up,' snuffled Issachar the jeweller.

Thus deep answered to deep in an infernal antiphon.

'Hit him hard,' bawled the tenors. 'He's got no friends,' responded the basses. Merrily from end to end of Oxford city sounded the splenetic choros, whilst writs and summonses were taken out by handfuls, and to all appearance the fate of handsome Covey of St. Benedict's was sealed.

In London they would have made mighty short work of a defendant of this variety. Whitecross or the Fleet would have opened its black portals to receive him, and his career would have

summarily closed. Not so in Oxford. There the college afforded a sanctuary. Messrs. Gripe, Snippins, and Issachar and one and all set in motion every engine of the law, but the porter of St. Benedict's declined to admit a single one of the angels within the threshold of the old college. Indeed, being a choleric gentleman of a certain age, and wattled withal about his gills, he treated such emissaries of the law to a commons of his own, which he was pleased to term justifiable blasphemy. In a general way, this worthy servant, in the event of an indulgence of his predisposition for highly-seasoned English, was liable to a scolding from the Rev. Euphorbias Niminy, B.D., the dean. But in a case like this, where the privileges of the college were concerned, due regard was considered quite permissible; the consequence whereof was that when the process-server showed his malignant phiz at the college gate such a shower of awful language descended upon his head that he deemed it advisable to sheer off, and wait his chance.

From this time forth Mr. Covey, being forewarned, was forearmed. Having before him the choice of Oxford Castle as a place of rest, or St. Benedict's College, he not unnaturally showed a pronounced preference for the latter. Hence he voted himself a prisoner week-days, and contented himself with a furious constitution the one day set apart for rest.

As for his friends, they rallied round him to a man. After a while, what became an established institution, to relieve the poor fellow of his desperate ennui. The general consumption of tobacco and of drinks multiplied about threefold. Ratting matches were held in the college, and were fought in odd corners of the college. Once, and once only, was a match dodgily disguised and smuggled through the lodge into the college, but on his return it required all the muscularity of Rullos the boxer, and Fibby the boxer, to keep off Messrs. Effett and the sheriff's officers, who were in attendance, one on one side and the other on the other, of the only entrance to St. Benedict's College. Armed to the teeth with injurious parchments. The experiment, though so far successful, inasmuch as the afore-mentioned officers retreated with somewhat darkened optics, was voted too risky to bear repetition. So, willy-nilly, Mr. Covey remained in his durance vile.

At length, however, this prolonged gloom was illumined by a ray of sunshine.

On this wise. Mr. Covey, as some wag sportively put it, might have been a wiser man and yet a better. His sporting propensities, in short, led him often in the direction of Tattersall's, and it happened that having learnt wisdom by experience he had then made a safe book on the Derby. When the great race was made, it transpired that he stood not only not to lose—which was of him—but even to win a tour ' that is, of course, sup

that all his friends came up to the scratch on settling-day, a contingency always worthy of taking into calculation in matters sportive.

With features irradiant of joy he entered the college dining-hall that night. In triumph he waved a telegram to his friends. The sum he had landed was sufficient to restore to him liberty. Gripe, Snippins, Issachar, and Co. would be simply beside themselves with delight at receiving an instalment of a shilling in the pound. Proceedings would be suspended no doubt, and for the remainder of the bright term our hopeful B.A. might enjoy himself, as of yore, consumedly.

Alas, that in mundane affairs there should always exist the chance of a slip between the cup and the lip! Thus it happened to poor Mr. Covey, B.A. One out of a batch of betting friends, in whose solvency he had confided only too implicitly, turned unexpectedly defaulter, thereby reducing his gains from a matter of four figures to a paltry hundred pounds all told.

What was to be done?

His relations were milked dry, and withal felt nothing short of exasperated at his wild career. Friends? Well, to do him justice, Covey of St. Benedict's was no sponge. From the day he left Eton to enter Oxford, to this very hour, he had always borne his fair share of the aggregate expenditure of his set. The wine-merchant and tobacconist might gnash their teeth with impotent anguish at a heavy loss, but they were the only sufferers. With his intimates he had ever squared the debts of hospitality honourably.

A council of war was held on that black Monday evening in his rooms.

'It's a clean mucker, dear old boy,' remarked Gigger, who won the cue at Bickerton's, and covered his college with glory in the single match against Cambridge, scoring, according to the dictum of Jonathan, as if he was inspired.

This comfortable doctrine found an echo all round. The case, indeed, seemed to contain within itself every element of finality. Hope was utterly beside the mark.

'Wh-what do you think you shall do?' inquired little Cotton, in a lamentable voice, expressive of the tenderest sympathy. Little C., by the bye, had inherited four thousand a year from his father, the Manchester man, and, what's more, there was nearly two thousand per annum still extant. He could afford a passing tear for a crony's collapse.

'Smoke,' replied Mr. Covey, pointing in his ancient free-handed style to the last box of bobos on the mantelpiece. 'And I say, Gigger, just open the cupboard, will you, and knock the necks off that lot of bottles? You'll find some tumblers somewhere.'

'Whatever you do, Gigger, don't!' exclaimed Jack Pottle, whose nasal appendage was colouring slowly but steadily under the influ-

ence of vintage port; adding, by way of explanation, 'I never travel without my elixir.'

Inasmuch as Mr. Pottle's elixir turned out to be a pocket cork-screw, a breakage of glass became superfluous; and the accidents having been removed from the bottles' necks on the most approved principles of dentistry, present company proceeded to regale their inner consciousness with sparkling and other fluids, till every one, Mr. Covey himself not excluded, began to view the clouded vista of the future in a more roseate hue, and the various Job's comforters set to work to extract as much honey as imagination could discover from the surrounding environment of bitter.

Mr. Cotton was the first to give birth to a happy thought.

'If I were you, Covey,' he said sententiously, 'with your good looks, and Piccadilly weepers, and—'

'Thanks,' interrupted that gentleman, who, though he could not hatch up a blush for the occasion, disliked none the less a latitudinarian series of compliments.

'If I were you,' resumed little Cotton, 'I—I tell you what I'd do. I'd take a ticket for Baden or Ischl, or some one of those places where coin congregates, and I'd marry an heiress. The older the better, you know, because then you'd have a chance of a second edition revised and improved.'

'Bosh!' interrupted Mr. Gigger, not giving Mr. Covey a second to reply to this benevolent scheme for his proximate welfare. '*Ne sutor ultra crepidam*, you know. A man with the wits of our friend here ought to be able to live anywhere. Pool, pyramids, whist, and unlimited loo will support an intelligent being in comfort, if not luxury, on either side of the Channel, so long as civilisation infests society.'

'Much obliged, gentlemen all,' here spoke Mr. Covey, taking his cigar from his mouth. 'Your sentiments do you honour and me proud. But with all deference to the judgment of friends generally, I may say that I've arrived at my own conclusion'—this with marked emphasis.

'Name!' burst simultaneously from a score of throats.

'The diggings!' was the firm response.

'The demon!' gasped forth Mr. Pottle, lapping earnestly his champagne, as the only *solatium* ready to hand or mouth.

'Yes,' continued Mr. Covey, with just a fraction of a sigh, 'I've had my innings, and I may say have scored well. That last twister, however, has knocked off the bails; so instead of howling dismally or picking a quarrel with the umpire, I intend to shoulder my bat and retire before the storm sets in overhead.'

'Nonsense, old boy!' vociferated little Cotton; 'ostracism will never do. Come, if you want a few hundreds, I—'

'Stop,' interposed Mr. Covey, almost sternly. 'It's very kind

and characteristic of you to make the offer, but, honour bright, it wouldn't fit this child. I'm rather gravelled, but not yet down to borrowing of my friends. That's the very last feather, and it generally breaks the camel's back.'

'But I mean it,' urged little Cotton impulsively.

'Of course you do,' replied his friend. 'However, gentlemen all, inasmuch as we are not exactly the committee of the whole house, or a discussion forum, I must ask you to consider my fate—pardon the pun—a *fait accompli*. Before I leave, nevertheless, I mean to appeal for one favour. I hope no one will inflict upon me the smart of a negative.'

'Anything you like,' was the hearty response in chorus.

Whereupon Mr. Covey proceeded to explain how that, funds being short, and an opportunity having unexpectedly occurred for him to obtain a cabin on board a merchant ship bound for Melbourne under unusually favourable circumstances, the owners in fact being on terms of intimacy with his family, he proposed that very evening to dispose of all his effects—furniture, pictures, books, ornaments, and the numberless pretty adjuncts of his cosy rooms—by raffle. He would make up the various goods into fifty lots, with the assistance of Messrs. Cotton and Pottle, and would issue fifty tickets, of the value of a guinea apiece, each of which would entitle the holder to a draw.

'But,' objected Mr. Gigger, 'your assets in these rooms, Covey, must have cost you five or six times the amount you intend to dispose of them for. You ought to double the price of the tickets in common justice to yourself.'

Mr. Covey, however, declined positively to vary his terms in his own favour; so it came to pass that the arrangements for the raffle were made for ten o'clock the same evening, when fifty gentlemen of St. Benedict's crowded into his cheery rooms.

In the centre of the table stood a waste-paper basket, wherein had been placed the various lot-tickets, carefully folded up by Mr. Cotton, who constituted himself master of the ceremonies, Mr. Covey having with some difficulty acquiesced in the earnest entreaty of his personal friends to absent himself from a scene which could but afford him much unnecessary pain. One's little household gods become after some years' acquaintance very dear, so much so that it happens in the wide world not unfrequently that needy people will pinch themselves of necessities to pay the enormous interest on pledges sanctioned by our existing usurious law; and that, too, year after year, until the value of the goods themselves has been exceeded, or perhaps even quadrupled.

'Now, gentlemen,' said little Cotton, when all were assembled, 'I put it to the vote—shall we draw by seniority, by alphabetical order, or on what principle?'

Seniority seemed to approve itself most to the collective con-

science of the company. Accordingly Mr. Cotton requested Mr. Simpkinson, a scholar, as being the senior undergrad. in the room, to forthwith open the ball by helping himself to a ticket.

With a broad and saponaceous grin Mr. Simpkinson, who had got into the college on the 'nonsense of merit,' and who, though he didn't boast a grandfather, thought quite treble X of himself, grabbed a lot-ticket out of the mass, and with a loud guffaw exclaimed, '*Macte virtute!* I've won his sealskin coat!'

It was even so. To make up the precise number of lots our friend Mr. Covey had thrown in a brand-new sealskin greatcoat, which had cost him something approaching forty guineas.

As no one seemed disposed to reciprocate Mr. Simpkinson's unhallowed mirth, the drawing proceeded, and after that sundry pictures and books had become the property of divers gentlemen present, Mr. Gigger landed for himself an exquisitely beautiful meer-schaum pipe.

'Thank the stars!' was his pious ejaculation. 'Poor old Covey was always uncommon proud of this. It will just do to cheer him up on his voyage.'

Somehow the notion thus broached by Mr. Gigger touched a spring of popular feeling. With the single exception of Mr. Simpkinson, who, like the miller of the Dee, 'cared for nobody, no not he,' every Benedict man commiserated heartily the ill-fortune of this handsome B.A. The fact was, he was emphatically a good fellow—jovial, festive, generous, with lots of lark, and no real vice, in his composition. Hence, *instantly*, one man after another, as he drew from the basket an item from Mr. Covey's Lares, vowed impulsively that he would offer it, after the manner of large-hearted Mr. Gigger, by way of a parting gift.

At last, however, Mr. Pottle, who happened to be in a condition not quite unlike the pictures of old Silenus, put in his thumb, and drew out—the *bedstead!*

'Wash th' use of thish?' hiccupped this pleasant gentleman; 'can't schleep in two bedsh at once. Wash th' use of it? Thash what I want to know?'

'I'll tell you what it is,' here interposed little Cotton; 'these gentlemen who wish to subscribe mutually for a testimonial—I'd better perhaps put it in that light—to our friend Covey will please remain after the raffle has concluded. Those who decline to take a part in such testimonial will withdraw'—this with a glance at chuckling scholar Simpkinson.

In a very few minutes all the lots were drawn, down to No. 49, which consisted of a copper kettle, a dozen tumblers, a tea-pot, a coffee-pot, and various articles of cookery. This was won by the redoubtable Mr. Cotton himself, to his infinite amusement. After which, of the entire assemblage one man only made his exit, bearing

on his arm his valuable prize. This, it need scarcely be added, was scholar Simpkinson.

No sooner was the door shut than Mr. Cotton proceeded to broach an idea which had entered his brain.

'Gentlemen,' he said, 'I perceive that we are united in our heartfelt sympathy for the infernal ill-fortune of one whom we are all proud to own as a Benedictine. ('Hear, hear!' and 'Right you are, sir!' with a sympathetic 'yoicks' from Mr. Pottle.) Now I need not remind all present that our friend does not possess the insensate cuticle of a Simpkinson, nor, to put it plainer, the hide of a rhinoceros. Consequently I am anxious, whilst joining heartily in your wish to benefit him, to avoid wounding sensibilities which have ever been tender. I propose, therefore, that those among us who have won portable goods—such as, for example, photographs, pipes, anything that he might care to carry across the ocean—should individually present them to him as parting gifts. But that with regard to the bulk of his furniture and movables, we agree to sell to the best advantage, and forward to him the proceeds. Depend upon it, poor fellow, he will need hard cash sorely when once he finds himself homeless and friendless on the other side of the world.'

A ringing cheer of approbation greeted this generous speech. The motion was carried by acclamation *nem. con.*; and the meeting separated on the simple understanding that all arrangements would be confided to the delicacy and judgment of Mr. Cotton.

Nevertheless, although Mr. Covey's friends triumphed beyond their warmest anticipations, they—under which category we must include especially Messrs. Gigger and Cotton—felt mightily affronted with scholar Simpkinson. Had he been a Jew usurer, he could not have realised to such an extent on the necessities of a poor soul. In round numbers he had pocketed thirty-five to one, for the coat was honestly worth close upon forty pounds, and would have proved a godsend to a traveller, not to mention its saleable value. It was a case, if ever there was one, of a repetition of the old Homeric legend, the point of which is summed up in the line :

* *Χαλκῶν δονάντι χρυσῶν αὖτις δέδρας*

—a veritable exchange of a pound of gold for a pound of brass, savouring of another Glaucus.

'This,' observed forcibly Mr. Gigger, 'is a style of speculation which must not be permitted in a respectable college. We must adopt measures, Cotton—yes, measures—to checkmate that swindler Simpkinson.'

'Certainly,' answered little Cotton; 'only it might be more lucid to give them a definition.'

'My dear boy,' returned his friend, 'pardon an old billiard-player when he reminds you that Carlyle was never more on the spot

than when he remarked that speech is brazen, silence silver-lead. I should not like to deprive you of the luxury of a genuine surprise.'

On the morrow, after many a kindly grasp from many a manly hand, Mr. Covey left Oxford. Messrs. Effett and Adder were *de rigueur* in attendance at the college-gate, but so dense was the crowd to wish him 'God-speed' that they were easily hustled to one side; and thus our hero escaped unscathed. His friends insisted on packing his portmanteau for him, a kindly office which gave them the opportunity of inserting surreptitiously his favourite meerschauum and a number of other treasures, whereunto Mr. Cotton added *proprio motu* a small rouleau of banknotes, whose presence caused Mr. Covey subsequently no small perplexity. Thus like the baseless fabric of a vision he passed away from the academic scene amid the blessings of the young and warm-hearted, amid the deep-drawn maledictions of a bevy of Oxford tradesmen, who, however, it must be confessed, contrived subsequently, by a judgmatical manipulation of other and solvent accounts, to more than make up for their grievous loss. Don't pity them. A bankrupt shopkeeper in a university town is as rare a spectacle as a dead donkey.

It has been asserted that May is, by a long chalk, the severest month of the English year, and that all the glorification of that month contained in the old madrigals is not so much twaddle, or the Popish relics of mariolatry (for May, we may inform the innocent Protestant, is dedicated to the B.V.M.), as sheer grim irony. Anyhow the clerk of the weather in this particular year took upon himself to turn on a tap of extreme cold towards the end of this poetic month, to the utter annihilation of wall-fruit and the disturbance of the biliary organs in the human frame.

The cold weather, however, had one preëminently surprising effect; that is to say, it caused scholar Simpkinson to air his new sealskin coat as if he were a ten-thousand-a-year man, to whom sovereigns were of as small account as coppers to less happy Christians. In his case the transformation was the more startling, because his ordinary habiliments were of bucolic cut, and had worn dismally seedy. St. Benedict's College at that period of its history boasted excessive neatness combined with admirable style in its men, and scholar Simpkinson had all along been considered the solitary exception which proved the universal rule, the solemn warning by which all others had profited to their backs' adornment.

Among others who took note of the leopard having changed his spots was Mr. Gigger. It riled his inmost soul to witness this swaggering snob in his friend's luxurious garment. The spectacle seemed more like a profanation than a pitiable burlesque. He therefore registered a vow by all the saints in his calendar that, at whatever cost, he would stop it; and when Mr. Gigger made up

mind to anything, be it cannon or pocket, bar accidents, it came to a moral.

The right moment soon arrived.

Placards of startling longitude, bristling too with *sesquiped-terba* and impossible illustrations, covered the various boardings in the suburbs of Oxford, announcing that Signor Tompkinson's owned troupe would perform for one night only, when the lightly Mdle. Tumbarelli would exhibit her hairbreadth escape from absolute annihilation, whilst the Red Rover of the Mexican Airie would ride twenty barebacked steeds astride, and the illustrious Herr Abtritt, the Teutonic clown, purposed to turn himself inside out, and otherwise to throw himself and his audience into convulsions. The whole to conclude with the grand, impressive, and improving moral drama of *Claude Duval the Highwayman*: Claude Duval, for the nine hundredth time, to be personated by Signor Tompkinson himself, late of the Cirque National, Paris. Admission sixpence.

Now under ordinary circumstances scholar Simpkinson, who, though a sort of Competition Wallah, was none too brilliant—his genius lying in the direction of slavish plodding—would have scorned the circus. He was just now reading frantically, with the ulterior hope of getting a second or third class, and time was too precious for him to give a passing thought to amusement. Yet if fired with the noble ambition of attaining to inferior distinction in the schools, his soul was malleable in one direction. Not to mystify, he was a man who would eat his hat, or drink corked wine, or mean himself anyhow for money. This disposition no doubt he inherited from his sire, who had prospered amazingly on the *rem so modo* principle as a retailer of Brummagem goods.

It was avarice which fetched him. Every one knew his weak point. Just as a glass of good liquor would have induced bibulous Jack Pottle to fight a cad, cheek a proctor, or, for the matter of that, ride a donkey up and down the High-street in surplice and bands, so a five-pound note was a lever potential enough to convert Mr. Simpkinson from his normal blatant Radicalism to bland Toryism, from the fanaticism of the conventicle to the sobriety of a rigid orthodoxy.

'I'll bet you,' exclaimed Mr. Gigger, 'an even quid, Simpkinson, that you do not show in seal at the circus and sit the performance out.'

The pupils of the scholar's orbits distended. A whole sovereign! Twenty shillings! No, nineteen and sixpence clear profit, reckoning for the sixpence admission. The claims of Plato and Hucydides were urgent—very; but—but no; he could not afford to refuse such a chance.

'Make it a guinea,' he replied, 'and I'm your man. Stop, enough; the money must be staked.'

'Right,' answered Mr. Gigger; 'we'll make Cotton the judicious bottle-holder, if you like.'

'Done.'

'Mind you,' remarked Mr. Gigger, as he registered the bet with some care, 'if you show in any other guise except seal, you pay. Is that clearly understood between us?'

'It is,' was the prompt rejoinder, although, to speak the truth, scholar Simpkinson's inner consciousness felt not a little bamboozled.

The evening of Signor Tompkinson's grand dramatic and Shakespearian entertainment witnessed one of those delightful atmospheric transitions which render the climate of England so very much the reverse of monotonous. Not to be diffuse, the frigid temperature of the previous week, without one note of warning, abruptly transformed into a vapour-bath. Sherry-cobbler came in with a rush, and iced cream usurped the place of iced air in the mesenteric regions.

Mr. Simpkinson thereupon began almost to rue his wager. Nevertheless, the bare thought of parting, as the song puts it, was such pain, that he resolved to stultify, not to say cook, himself, rather than fail to win the coveted coin. Accordingly, with Mr. Covey's magnificent sealskin coat on his arm, he strolled off to the meadows where Tompkinson's troupe had encamped, the locality whereof could be easily distinguished for a surrounding half mile by the frightful bray of a battered cornet, which never by any chance struck any interval, but if not sharp was consistently flat.

At the entrance of the tent he was at once surrounded by a select circle of St. Benedict's men, who must have been dining, so very merry were they. Having duly donned the grandiose sealskin, he found that if he was to earn his money, the friends of Mr. Gigger meant to take it well out in chaff.

'Beastly cold,' observed little Cotton dryly, pretending to sneeze.

'Shivery-shakery—O, O, O! the man that couldn't get warm!' trolled bibulous Jack Pottle derisively.

'*Cælum non animum mutant*,' pursued jovial Mr. Rullocks the stroke.

Nor were the waggeries of the bystanders quite confined to verbal badinage. On the contrary, Mr. Simpkinson was almost universally voted a cat; and cries of 'Poor puss, meeayow, tas!' &c., arising on all sides, whilst intrusive hands stroked his garment with pretty playfulness, he was only too glad to pay his sixpence and bolt inside the tent, where Mdlle. Tumbarelli, in very airy costume, was exhibiting her fair proportions on a steed painted something like a sham maple door.

He had scarcely taken his seat when Mr. Gigger, planting himself by his side, groaned forth dolefully:

'I say, Simpkinson, this is too bad. You mean to win my money.'

'Rather!' was the uncompromising response. Our scholar was not by any means in the best of tempers, having, in fact, tried hard to look pleasant under most trying circumstances, and, be it added, having partially failed.

'It's precious hot!' continued Mr. Gigger. 'Hadn't you better take your coat off?'—this with an air of persuasion intended to represent slyness.

'Ha! ha!' roared scholar Simpkinson. 'Not if I know it. Do you take me for a greenhorn, my friend? Let those laugh who win. I mean—to laugh.'

'H'm,' ejaculated Mr. Gigger, very much as if he were fairly posed. 'You won't be persuaded?'

'Thank you, no. By Jove, what a pip that female has gone!' This in reference to La Tumbarelli, who, being rather heavier weighted than an ordinary cherub, had somehow overbalanced herself; and whereas she had been standing on the maple-patterned steed, had contrived to occupy instead a sedent posture on the turf very un-cherubic indeed.

'Delightful!' observed Mr. Gigger. 'Nothing like a little realism in art. I love the naturalesque. It materialises one's ideal of the poetry of motion.'

The unlucky Tumbarelli seemed, however, to be of a different opinion; for instead of seeking, as is the etiquette of the cirque, to recover her missing tip, she limped off on the arm of Signor Tompkinsoni very much as if she had had enough of it.

A circus whereunto lovers and lasses resort to devour oranges and nuts, and the wily counter-jumper betakes himself to shake off the ennui of repeating incessantly 'Three three-farthings,' is one thing, and a circus populated by a few hundred uproarious undergraduates is another. In the one case, the professionals perform, and the audience stare, grin, and applaud. In the other, the regulars are, to a great extent, relieved of the responsibility of catering for the company's gratification, inasmuch as the lively young gentlemen seem quite able to amuse themselves, what with chaff, noise, songs, and a little amateur pugilism.

Thus the performance proceeded merrily enough until the final tableaux, entitled, as has been recorded, 'The moral drama of *Claude Duval the Highwayman*,' the principal part being taken by the great Tompkinsoni in person, who appeared perfectly irradiant in tights and spangles, supported by La Tumbarelli, who having recovered from her 'pip' prepared to dance a fandango on the maple-backed horse, her perpendicular being charitably preserved for her by the dashing highwayman, who was, beyond a doubt, firm on his pins.

This exquisite moral spectacle, as the playbills described it, was received with roars of merriment. It was not that Herr Abtritt the

German clown provoked mirth, though, independent of his feat of turning himself out, he did lilt forth 'Johnny Smoker, Ich Kann speilen mit meinem zing-zing,' and imitate to perfection every instrument in the orchestra. It was rather that everybody had exalted himself into a condition of supernal jollity; to such an extent, indeed, that a request for a Dutch chorus evoked sounds like unto pandemonium itself very much magnified.

In the midst of this glorious shindy, when it seemed as if chaos had broken out again, a blue ball of fire suddenly ascended upwards from the very centre of the audience, passed straight through the tent like a bullet, and forth into the night. This was followed instantaneously by a series of fizzes and cracks, another sulphur ball, yet another, and then—

With a shriek of supreme anguish scholar Simpkinson, to all appearance bursting with fire at every pore, and crackling as if he were a veritable Guy Fawkes, dashed madly through the throng of undergraduates, over the barriers, and into the charmed ring.

'Put him out! Water! Roll him on the ground! Help!' and fifty similar cries rent the air, adding to the insane confusion, the while the burning man continued to issue forth fireworks of every sort and size to all points of the compass.

'Take his coat off, you idiots!' shouted a hoarse voice not altogether dissimilar from that of Mr. Gigger.

This suggestion was adopted promptly and resolutely. The gorgeous garment which erst adorned the splendid limbs of Mr. Covey, B.A., was dragged from off the sibilant scholar, and thrown ignominiously on the ground in holes, as if riddled by shot or shell, smouldering, and ever and anon emitting some lovely specimen of pyrotechnic art.

'Hello, my friend!' bawled unkind Mr. Gigger, leaping blithely into the ring, and addressing scholar Simpkinson, who in good sooth, though singed, was more terrified than wounded. 'Hello, how about our little bet?'

'Augh!' was the only sentiment of disgust the wretched wight could emit.

'I claim the stakes,' cried the winner triumphantly, patting Mr. Cotton on the back, and handing him his betting-book to verify his demand.

'Jove be praised,' whispered the game little fellow, 'for the avenging of Covey'—at the same time extracting from his pocket a brace of guineas.

Scholar Simpkinson somehow did not again try his luck at a raffle; nor did he even care to pick up the bits of the combusted coat, fragments whereof—so the story goes—became converted into tobacco-pouches in memory of his startling *fiasco*.

COMPTON READE, M.A.

A PARSON ON THE STAGE

If my esteemed friend Mrs. Grundy is, as I have reason to believe, troubled with corns, I beg her to keep clear of me during the progress of this article, or I shall certainly step on some of her favourite excrescences. I fear I have already wounded a few of that delicate lady's sensibilities; but I respect her corns, and therefore warn her that I am going to tread heavily in their direction for a while. The title of my present paper is a misleading one, I know. Let me go in for a little candid confession, and own that I rather like alarming Mrs. G. On this occasion, however, she may be easy; I am not one of those whom she is wont to regard as 'Signs of the Times,' and stigmatise as histrionic parsons. I do not share Mrs. Grundy's alarm as to the Ritualists, but I am not one myself; neither am I about, as she may suppose, to appear on the boards in my clerical capacity. I am simply a nineteenth-century Jeremy Collier with a difference, going to have my small say on a subject whereupon I know it is necessary to dispose of Mrs. Grundy at the outset. The estimable creature has come to the conclusion, if that be not too logical a way of putting her prejudices, that the stage is altogether wrong; and she will smell sulphur when I say that I, though a clergyman (or a 'minister' as she elects to term my cloth), have arrived at an opposite conclusion. I arrogate this expression to myself because I have really gone to work in a logical way. I mean, I threw off my white tie, M.B. waistcoat, and clerical coat—all of which I wear when I am in uniform—and went the round of several London theatres. I did not go swallow-tailed to the stalls, because my object was to see as far as I could the effect the theatre had upon the masses—the people in the pit and gallery; so to the pit and gallery I went, black-tied and shooting-coated. It may, perhaps, be urged that the very fact of my going to the theatre in mufti shows I am ashamed of it; but perhaps my lay readers—possibly even some of the clerical world themselves—are not aware to what an extent a white tie acts as a damper in society. So rooted is the idea as to a clergyman being made of different flesh and blood from other people, that average humanity adopts quite an artificial style in addressing the cloth, making one almost think with Sydney Smith that there must be three sexes—men, women, and clergymen. It is not simply that young bloods would chaff consumedly if they caught, as they would fancy, the parson out 'on the loose,' should he venture into it in clerical attire, but the steady sober people upon whom I want to calculate the effect of dramatic exhibitions would

shut up forthwith, and fail to let his reverence know how well they liked the play. This distinctive dress, which the late Canon Kingsley so wisely discarded, is, I believe, answerable for a good deal of the 'alienation' between clergy and laity which the bishops have been lately bewailing.

Let me be extremely honest, and, now our elderly female friend is out of hearing, confess I am no novice at the theatre. I always enjoyed 'the play' like a child. I make children an excuse for going to pantomimes; and elder ones are my pretext when I want to blow the vapours off with a burlesque or opera bouffe. But I take no youngsters with me now; I am out on business. I really want to see whether Mr. Moody's test of conversion recently enunciated, namely, that the converted man or woman shall cease to be a 'theatre-goer,' has any foundation in fact. To me, I own, it seems as ridiculous to test a man's moral or religious condition by the question, Does he go to the theatre? as by an examination as to whether he rides in a hansom or a four-wheeler, or whether he has a wooden leg or wears a glass eye. It has simply nothing to do with the matter. There are plenty of saints in the theatre every night—those unsuspected saints the 'strangeness' of whose 'salvation' the Wise Man tells us shall one day astonish us fools—while it is quite unnecessary for me to remark that there are plenty of sinners outside, many of them just as unsuspected as the saints within, turning up their eyes and noses, and railing at the wicked theatre-goers, amongst whom, it may be well for them to recollect, our own Royal Family are about the most habitual. And 'what for no?'

Now I have not the slightest wish to be profound, but I cannot help becoming for the moment just in the least degree historical, and remembering that throughout a large portion of its career the Drama has been distinctly a religious institution. Those performances in the great Dionysiac theatre on the slopes of the Acropolis at Athens, to wit, were part of the worship of Dionysus or Bacchus; the Vine-god being to the Greek what the God of the Harvest was to the Jew. In these days of comparative mythology it is customary to relax somewhat the old rigid notion of 'paganism.' Even Fathers of the Church have been ready to concede a quasi-inspiration to Plato; and now we go further than this, and read in all the fables and mythologies of civilised antiquity distortions of primal revelation. Under this aspect, the drama, like the gorgeous worship of Tabernacle and Temple, was but an elaborate recognition of the great powers of nature. But we need not go to mythology, or travel so far as Athens, to prove our present point. The Miracle-plays, Mysteries, and Interludes of 'Merrie England' were as thoroughly religious representations as the Ober-Ammergau Passion-play itself; and did not even Hannah More write religious dramas? The non-religious reputation of the drama seems spasmodic and intermittent. I am not, how-

er, going to shield myself behind these old precedents, and say that the drama of to-day is a religious institution in this, or indeed in any sense, though neither will I allow that it is necessarily irreligious. I do not believe that Hannah More would draw houses now. I have, in fact, a shrewd idea that she would, as Mr. Chatterton, I believe, said of Shakespeare some time ago, 'spell ruin' to a manager. But why the stage should be looked upon as irreligious now any more than in the days of Queen Elizabeth, I can only understand by looking at the prejudice as a persistent relic of Puritanism. In that gloomy period which intervened between the First and Second Charles Stuart the playhouses were pulled down, and it was made penal to witness a theatrical performance. It takes a wonderful man to root out some ridiculous prejudice—as, for instance, this one; and also that remnant of monkery which forbids College Fellows to marry: from both of which prejudices, by the way, I have myself suffered considerably.

But apropos of that same William Shakespeare of whom I spoke just now, I will not claim as an evidence that the drama is not quite moribund the fact of Shakespeare being represented at six or seven London theatres at the present moment. In the newspaper before me I find Shakespeare announced over and over again. Signor Salvini is playing Othello at Drury Lane, occasionally to audiences of actors; and Mr. Irving still continues that rôle of the royal Dane which beguiled even pantomime people from their wonted grooves and ruts last Christmastide. Mr. Holland finds he can cater for transpontine audiences with Mr. Creswick's Hamlet. In the *Times* of May 8th he offered *morceaux* from six different Shakespearean dramas to the Surrey folks, and promised Mr. Crawford Wilson as a new Othello; Mr. Coghlan plays Shylock at the Prince of Wales's; *Much Ado about Nothing* is the piece at the Gaiety; Mr. Evelyn Bellew, son of the late celebrated reader, is announced for Shakespeare at the National Standard; the Grecian has *Hamlet* in prospect; and the Crystal Palace advertises *Twelfth Night*. This present tense applies to one single copy of a newspaper. Certainly one can say we are neglecting our great national poet; and if Shakespeare spells ruin, the London theatres must be on the road to Basinghall-street in a body. I only notice this fact in passing, however, and without deducing from it at any length the very obvious and somewhat tempting moral, that the popular taste cannot be regarded as so hopelessly degenerated when Shakespeare will draw to so many houses simultaneously. So confident am I of my case, that I will even consent to put the immortal William on one side, and suppose, without conceding the point, that the present furor for Shakespeare may be spasmodic, and due to contagious Irvingism. As for that marvellous creation, Mr. Irving's Hamlet—and the same remark will apply to Signor Salvini's Othello—it has been done

to death in the way of mere dramatic criticism already, and is as yet too recent to have simmered well in one's mind, so as to be written of thoroughly in an *ex post facto* fashion. I am not writing an ordinary dramatic critique, but rather pointing the moral from what has been written before. Regarding the matter from a different point of view, and on what I do not call offensively 'goody' grounds, I believe this creation of Hamlet by Mr. Irving, after he had made his mark in less 'legitimate' characters, is likely to have as widespread though silent an effect as Mr. Spurgeon's preaching unquestionably had on that of religious bodies which would have disowned the soft impeachment of being affected by him, but which were affected nevertheless. Whether the effect of this levelling-up among the playhouse folk is going to be permanent forms quite a separate and distinct question. Let us say that Mr. Irving and Signor Salvini are a sort of histrionic Moody and Sankey, and that their influence permeates the 'theatre-goers' just as the American Evangelists affect the chapel-goers and church-folks of the more evangelical sort; still that does not touch my case. I put Shakespeare on one side for the moment, and take my stand upon the ordinary average London drama of the period. I own I enjoy seeing the mirror held up to nature—my own particular nature—by Mr. Buckstone, to wit, in his part of the Rev. Aminadab Sleek in the *Serious Family*. I plead very guilty indeed to appreciating Mr. Farnie; and under such circumstances I invite my readers to put their arms in mine—one at a time, of course—and, as Dr. Johnson said, take a walk down Fleet-street, or the part of the Strand which abuts on that haunt of the *litterati*, and where, between six and seven every evening, play-actors and play-goers most do congregate. Let us join one of those *queues* outside the pit-door and see if the 'theatre-goers' are really so very wicked after all, or the bill-of-fare provided for them so extremely demoralising as would be implied in Mr. Moody's indiscriminate diatribe. I have no prejudice, be it distinctly understood, against the Transatlantic evangelists. I think they may do a great deal of good in their way; only I have a sort of notion that Mr. Moody's preaching, and still more Mr. Sankey's singing, are amazingly like a reproduction of the old religious interlude; and what I do object to is their illustrating the old proverb, that 'two of a trade never agree,' by railing wholesale against theatre-goers, and fancying their own is the sole method of doing good. Let our typical theatre be the Olympic, where I notice that the *Two Orphans* is to be played for the 205th time on the evening I select for being present. I am the more disposed to visit this theatre as the piece is a confessed adaptation from the French, and therefore (as the growlers would suggest) a fair representation of the ordinary English drama of the hour, if it be not Hibernian to say so. I don't agree with the old gentleman in the pit, who

all dramatic talent died out with Kemble and Liston, that this fact of frequent adaptation necessarily indicates the downfall of the British drama. Of course I am glad when we get original works, such as those of the late Mr. Robertson or the present Mr. Albery, Mr. Gilbert, or Mr. Byron; but I rather advocate Free Trade in this as in other matters. However, let us go into the Olympic Orphanage.

In the first place I notice that though my programme informs me Mr. Oxenford's version of *Les Deux Orphelines* has been running since September 14, 1874, yet there is really a very respectably-filled house, considering it is a genial spring evening, and that the delicious garden skirting the Embankment, where I have been sitting for half-an-hour in preference to waiting in the theatre, offers very strong counter-attractions in the shape of budding lilac and pendulous laburnum. However, I am out on business, and must undergo the gas and glare. I daresay Mr. Moody would hardly believe me if I put my theatre-going down as a sort of penance on this particular evening.

Well, there were lots of 'wicked' people in the pit and gallery who enjoyed seeing Mr. Crichton kicked about by his master, Mr. Chili Chutnee, in *Twenty Minutes with a Tiger*; but I suppose the veriest Tartuffe would scarcely consider this enjoyment a sign of an unregenerate heart. By the time Mr. Mallandaine's appropriate overture to the melodrama—or the 'realistic drama,' as the bills have it—commenced, the boxes and stalls were fairly filled too, and we settled ourselves down for the six acts and eight tableaux of which the play is composed.

Now the preëminent merit of this drama for my purpose was that, whilst it presented in a graphic form, calculated to interest the gods, certain abuses of French society in the eighteenth century, it glided gently over the objectionable portions (that is, Mr. Oxenford's version did, whatever the original work of MM. Denery and Cormon might have done), and yet it did not fall into the error of presenting what had any appearance of being an 'expurgated' edition of the original work. There is no greater mistake than this treating men and women like grown-up babies. It is as bad, on the other side, as the parading guilt in attractive form, which has been done, I know, in one or two exceptional dramas of late years. There is intrigue of course,—it would not be a French drama without it,—but the intriguants go satisfactorily to the bad, and the two orphans, after being dreadfully 'put upon' and 'drove about,' come right in the end, quite in accordance with the retributive code of stage justice. And the great point which struck me as a parson was that all along the sympathies of the audience were on the right side. When Henriette, borne off to the Pavillon du Bel-air, looks round on the glittering throng and says, 'I was looking to see whether there was a gentleman here,' and then, on being

informed that all were gentlemen, corrected herself by adding, 'I beg your pardon, I was looking to see if there was a *man of honour*;' the applause of the Olympic gods was immense. Of course there was such a man of honour, and when the curtain falls on the second act with the young chevalier carving a way for the poor orphan right through the body of the vicious proprietor of Bel-air, the enthusiasm was unbounded. So, again, when the old Count de Liniere, Minister of Police, says that the supposed *mésalliance* of his nephew, the chevalier, shall be duly entered in the archives of the police, and moralises on the unfairness of great families being treated differently from the bourgeoisie in this respect, the house is brought down again. Mr. Charles Harcourt is such a gentlemanly old functionary that a word from him would go a long way with an Olympian. Mr. Rignold too as the devil-may-care Jacques, though an immense favourite with the audience as with his disreputable mamma, gets no sympathy when he is 'knifed' by Mr. Neville, in the character of his crippled brother, for offering violence to the other poor orphan girl, Louise, whose blindness is so artistically depicted by Miss Fowler. The Police Bureau, the Church of St. Martin, the Grisette's Chamber *sous les toits*, and the Courtyard of the Salpêtrière form a string of pictures with which it is well our London-bound denizens should be familiar, even though they cannot accomplish the journey 'to Paris and back for five pounds.' Here, I submit, is intellectual pabulum for them, not of a high order from the mere pedagogue's point of view, perhaps, but homœopathic, prettily gilded, and easily assimilated, while perfectly free from any alloy of dubious morality. Is it not, I venture to ask, a mistake to relegate to the powers of evil a machinery which not only may be but is, I believe, so potent for good? It puts me in mind of Rowland Hill's argument for secular minstrelsy in worship: 'Why should the devil have all the good tunes?' Mr. Moody, or Mr. Sankey at all events, agrees practically with the argumentation implied in that query. Surely it is worth while to entertain the question whether good might not be bound up with a stage play as well as with pious Christy-Minstrel effusions. To say such is not the case is simply to beg the question. The burden of proof clearly lies upon those who denounce 'theatre-going' indiscriminately as wrong. Why should we not draw upon the devil's repertoire (even supposing that functionary to have taken possession of them) for our plays as well as our psalm-tunes? But is it not making rather an unwise concession to hand over to him so exceedingly popular a means of entertainment, for the regulation of which we may surely trust an educated public opinion just as we do for a hundred other agencies—the press amongst others—which, though just as dangerous, do not require to be licensed, and are not denounced wholesale by American revivalists?

I remember, some years ago, when I contemplated a series of articles on this subject in a daily newspaper, going with Mr. Cave, who then had the Victoria Theatre, into the manager's box and studying the gallery with him. I am afraid to say how many that capacious gallery holds, but the large majority of its occupants were boys and girls. He contemplated their pale but often grimy visages, as they rose tier above tier, with something like pride—really very much, it struck me, as a schoolmaster might regard his pupils in a large mixed school; and he particularly drew my attention to the fact, that whenever a bit of good morality cropped up in the sanguinary drama that was being enacted for their delectation, these juvenile critics recognised and appreciated it, applauding the claptrap sentiment to the very echo. Now whether these boys and girls would not have been better at a real night-school or in the gallery of a church or chapel is an abstract question with which I do not feel called upon to grapple. If I did discuss it I should claim the right of questioning the likelihood of their being there even if they had not been at the 'Vic;' and I can calculate half a dozen possibilities, none of them very remote, that they might have been doing many worse things than sitting perched up there clapping their uncomely hands at bits of cheap morality coming from the mouth of a blood-stained but repentant ruffian. It was, I felt and still feel, a rough-and-ready mode of education, but better than that of the flagstones in the New Cut outside, and certainly requiring no element of compulsion such as the School-Board officer is obliged to call in to enforce the attendance of young gutter girls and street Arabs at the ill-appreciated shrines of Minerva. Besides, these occupants of the gallery at the 'Vic.' were too old for the attentions of the School-Board officer, boys and girls though they were in years, even if it were not an anachronism to speak of that official at the date of those bygone experiences. I confess freely, however, though I know I shall be held a heretic for the avowal, that I would much rather see those lads and lasses up there intent upon something, however faintly, intellectual than smoking and sotting their evening away as I have too much reason to fear they would, if Manager Cave had not laid on something very sanguinary indeed to prove a counter-attraction against the ginshop and penny smoke for the investment of their hardly-earned coppers. What we—I am speaking of some at least of my clerical confreres—want in this respect is a small infusion of common sense. We are apt to legislate for ideal, almost idyllic, lads and lasses; but, as a rule, they are neither idyllic nor ideal in the purlieus of the New Cut, or Dr. F. G. Lee might attract more of them to his church with its exquisite and most æsthetic ritual. I think he is quite right in his method of appealing to them via the external sense of beauty; it is his only chance; but I fancy, from what I have seen of his congregations, that it scarcely answers as

one feels it ought to with the special class for which it is intended. I did not recognise any of my Victoria-gallery occupants clothed and in their right mind at All Saints' when I visited it, as I always do when I want to see the most correct services in London. I only mention this particular church because it is close to the Victoria Theatre, and because it adopts an ornate ritual; but it appears to me to illustrate the position I am assuming, that we legislate too much for an ideal hobbledohoyhood in our arrangements social, ecclesiastical, and educational. A well-regulated theatre, as I have every reason to believe Mr. Cave's was at that time (and I have not lost sight of him since), might, I believe, *pace* Mrs. Grundy, do an infinity of good, and rather strengthen than weaken the hands of the neighbouring clergyman and schoolmaster by refining, in however slight a degree, the taste of that very rough material the Arab, and making him capable of appreciating the far-higher influences that would meet him in church and school.

Of course I may be wrong in all this. I do not for one moment wish to dogmatise. I am not saying that I would expose a lad, still less a young girl, to all the temptations they would meet with at a theatre any more than I would let them loose on the world in any sense without guidance. But I contend that the temptations of the theatre are accidental and not essential. It is unfair to argue against the use of anything from its possible abuse. I have seen flirtation going on and known appointments to be made in church; but I never heard anybody unreasonable enough to argue that therefore it was better young people should not go to church. My point is, that the love of dramatic performances, which is, I believe, instinctive in most of us, may be utilised, and that to cry out 'Unclean!' against everybody whom we choose to call a 'theatre-goer' is unwise, if for no other reason, because it gives a spurious dash and air of bravado to the youth who is let loose on London life, and who may spend too much of his time at the theatre; for I need scarcely say it is possible to have too much of this as of many other good things. I recollect I never read *Don Juan* until an injudicious relative told me it was wrong. Moore's edition of Byron would have been quite enough to scare me from the study; but when I was informed it was improper I went conscientiously—if I may so say—through all the twenty-two volumes to discover the improprieties; just as the elder who was caught at the theatre by one of the congregation defended himself by saying he had only looked in to see if any of the chapel-people were there, and now he had caught one *in flagrante delicto*.

Perhaps one of the very commonest inconsistencies among the many which prevail is to be found connected with this same matter of theatricals. We take our little ones to the Christmas pantomime. We encourage our boys to act in school plays; but when the boy

develops into a young man, if he retains his pantomimic or school-play penchant so far as to be a frequent visitor to the theatre, we look down on him as depraved, and offer, perhaps, the most attractive premium possible on his continuing his course by terming him 'dissipated' or—still worse—'fast.' I myself, when a spud of thirteen, came to board in the head-master's house of one of our most celebrated London schools; and, just released as I was from the maternal apronstrings, felt it an immense privilege to be able to go to the theatre whenever I liked—supposing the state of the funds to be favourable—by only giving notice that I intended to do so. The very ease with which the process was conducted made me moderate in availing myself of the privilege, and I never once got into mischief, or knew a case even of bigger boys than myself doing so. I have no doubt some sort of surveillance was kept upon the frequency with which we availed ourselves of this privilege, the hours of our return, &c.; but it was not apparent, and it was a tacit rule of honour on our parts not to abuse our liberty. On the contrary, when I went into lodgings in London, after I had taken my degree at college, I was quite staggered to hear the above-mentioned injudicious relative say to me once, 'I called at your lodgings, in your absence, and have been talking to your landlady. I am glad to hear you are always so early at night, and *never go to the theatre*;' the fact being that, on motives of economy as well as taste, I scarcely ever failed to go to the play of an evening; for I found that half-price to the pit, and a mild supper after, came cheaper than burning coals and candle and feeding at home. What made my landlady burden her conscience I don't know; but of course I couldn't expose her without meanness; but I felt uncommonly like Joseph Surface in consequence.

My first idea when I sat down to this article was to embody in it the result of my visits to some half-dozen west-end houses, as narrated in a certain corpulent note-book which lies before me. I have only taken as my text one melodrama and a few old memorials of the New Cut, and with these as my text have pretty well exhausted sermon limits. The genial fun of *Tom Cobb* and *Our Boys* I may not tell of now, nor recount how amusingly Mr. Lionel Brough as Blue Beard described to me the sort of man he was. But there is just one London theatre which is so typical both in historical position and in the fame of the men who are at the head of affairs there, that I must give a passing glance at it and them; I mean the Haymarket, with Messrs. Buckstone and my Lord Dundreary. If there be any truth in the adage, 'Laugh and grow fat,' I certainly owe something of my adiposity to Mr. Sothern; for I can laugh at the *American Cousin* now just as much as the first time I heard it, in the same way as the *Pickwick Papers* amuse me quite as thoroughly now as when I first read them in their sea-green monthly parts.

There are some other things besides beauty which are a joy for ever, and Lord Dundreary is one of them.

The play, however, most to my present purpose is that which has become a thorough *pièce de résistance* at the Haymarket, namely, Mr. Robertson's comedy *David Garrick*. I verily believe that the majority of those who denounce 'theatre-goers' indiscriminately know as much about them and what they go to see as Mr. Simon Ingot and his friends knew about the 'play-hactors.' David Garrick himself is no greater contrast to the vulgar ideal these worthy cits set up for themselves than his representative Mr. Sothern is to the actor whose fascinations form the special object of Pope Moody's anathemas. Let us confess that there may be here and there some pretty little idiot like Ada Ingot, who will have her head turned by a popular actor and become stage-struck in consequence. Has such a thing never occurred with a popular curate? How many a daughter is at this moment an absentee from home because a false idea of duty prisons her within narrowing nunnery walls! Without in any way sharing Mr. Newdegate's aversion to these institutions altogether, which are often real havens of repose for the storm-beaten spirit and centres of good influence on which Christian women may concentrate their energies, one cannot quite forego the *tu quoque* involved in the certainty that the history of David Garrick is written over and over again every year of grace with a curate for its hero instead of a 'play-hactor.' We may, indeed, be well content to take the Little House in the Haymarket, with its refined but attractive programme, interpreted by that company of educated gentlemen and gentlewomen, who obey the behests of Manager Buckstone, as our ideal of the London theatre in the nineteenth century. Will Mr. Moody do me the favour to step across from his bigger house over the way, and, looking around at the audience as they enjoy *David Garrick* or *Lord Dundreary Married and Settled*, deliberately say that these 'theatre-goers' are necessarily unregenerate because of their transient and most necessary relaxation?

To some it may be recreative to go to the bigger house and hear Moody—lots of erring sheep came into the Little House in mistake the night I was there, and ran out as if somebody was after them *in propriâ personâ* as soon as they discovered their mistake. One clergyman in the most correct Anglican attire occupied the very centre of the dress circle, and I do *not* think he had come by mistake. I do not fancy either that he came to scoff, and stopped to—well, stopped for the play. He had honestly come to see Buckstone and Sothern, and enjoyed each considerably.

And 'what for no?' I repeat with Meg Merrilies. Never did we need relaxation so much as in this age of intense labour and keen competition. Let us by all means, as freeborn Britons, have the right to choose the method by which we will unbend. No—

body denounces the revivalists ; let them leave us theatre-goers alone.

This is, above all else, an age of strong common sense, when people must not talk nonsense if they would get listeners. Independent speaking is in vogue to a degree it has seldom attained before. A certain amount of old stereotyped notions linger on, and this making a bugbear of the theatre is one of them. I should like to hear what a prelate like the Bishop of Manchester or a preacher like Mr. Haweis would say about this tabooed subject, if all external pressure was quite removed. For myself, my avocations have of necessity taken me a good deal out of clerical ruts and grooves, and right glad on my own account am I that such is the case ; but I feel I am thereby disqualified from speaking with authority from the ecclesiastical standpoint. Giving the clergy full credit for sincerity in this matter, I believe that in all which regards the arrangements of a theatre, the manners and customs of actors and actresses, and the style of the pieces being played under their very noses, they know about as much as they do of the internal social life of the Fiji Islanders. They inherit old prejudices that have come down from Noll's Roundheads, and credit silly stories of Bohemianism as appertaining of necessity to actors and actresses, while they appear to think that the Congreve model of comedy, which roused old Jeremy Collier's bile, is still in full possession of the London stage. Never was a greater fallacy ; never a more fatal mistake than for the clergy of a Protestant Church to decry intellectual machinery which, whilst it denounces the Tartuffes, the Sleeks, and the Stigginses, has none but respectful words for real religion and sound morality.

C. MAURICE DAVIES, D.D.

THE COLLAPSE OF WALLAHISM

It is the veriest truism that for the past two decades the country has been infatuated on the subject of competition. Just as Free Trade was regarded as the panacea to cure all mundane evils by a set of sciolists who have profited largely by the general acceptance of their false gospel, so, on a somewhat analogous principle, it was anticipated that by putting up every place of honour and profit to a sort of intellectual auction, men of the largest mental wealth would come to the fore, and the country would secure the services of the really wise. Had this fallacy continued to hold and progress at the rate it started somewhere about the year 1855, on the next voidance of the arch-see of Canterbury we should have been edified by an advertisement in the *Times* announcing that candidates for this appointment, who might of course be of any nationality and any or no creed, must attend on a certain day at Somerset House with the usual certificates of vaccination, &c. &c., to exhibit their comparative or superlative proficiency on subjects as wholly irrelevant to the duties of the office as could be conceived by mortal stupidity, *e.g.* dynamics, physical geography, Arabian antiquities, or Chinese metaphysics.

The above example of what might have occurred is by no means so preposterous as would appear on the surface. Was it not proposed in cold blood that no member of the House of Commons, though he might have secured the suffrages of half-a-million electors, should be permitted to take his seat until he had satisfied those Tartarean magnates, the Civil Service Examiners, of his ability to construe Thucydides without the aid of a dictionary, and to manipulate 'surds'—whatever they may mean? Have we not organised a system of admission to the noble foundations of Eton and Winchester, whereby little children of the age of twelve or thirteen are raced against each other, having previously gone through a prolonged course of painful cramming by a professional coach? Last, and by no means least, did not some dunderheaded *doctrinaire* persuade an irrational House of Commons to sanction the entire executive of the Empire of India being consigned to the hammer of that George Robins of the intellectual auction-mart, Mr. Lingen? Moreover, even where competition was nominally excluded, as for example in the Navy, the wretched officers were examined *ad nauseam*,—examined until they got to dread the sight of print and paper about as cordially as did the martyrs of the Inquisition the thumbscrews and the rack.

Perhaps it may be apposite here to put in a word for poor knowledge thus mercilessly hacked, and as a consequence heartily hated. The outcome of this system of compulsion and forcing is, not that men learn more or love letters, but that, having once passed the hideous ordeal, a dull re-action sets in against all reading whatsoever, and the distaste for mental exertion once acquired remains throughout life. Ask the bookselling trade whether a genuine thirst for knowledge or cultivation has followed the wider spread of education. The reply will be, not only that the higher and heavier order of literature sells slowly, but that even the lightest, brightest, and most attractive publications need very earnest pushing in order to induce our public, which in lieu of reading has taken to living in the open air and lounging, to skim their pages. The old story of the confectioner's boy seems forgotten. To escape the risk of perpetual pilferings, an astute vendor of pastry and sweets forced his new Mercury to gorge till he was sick, and then to gorge again. Master Lightfinger in consequence received so effectual a sickener, that he never after could endure the sight of those edibles he once was quite ready to esteem as luxuries worth some trouble and peril to obtain. This, we apprehend, affords an excellent parallel to the case of our bedrugged, over-worked wallah. You compel him to eat, eat, eat of the tree of knowledge until he is fairly nauseated, and then the moment you take your goad away he turns with a sigh of relief to the tree of folly, and in the future rejects all *pabulum* not of a simple character, requiring no effort to digest. In plain English, your wallah may be a precocious boy, but he turns out a dismally backward man. The poor creature's capacity for deglutition is hopelessly dwarfed. He might for a lifetime have enjoyed a diurnal repast on the sweets of knowledge. By one fatal surfeit you have for ever disgusted him, and thereby the best of a strong man is lost to society.

By way of illustrating practically the vicious effects of wallahism we need but point to the utter dearth of rising talent in Parliament. Of those men of moderate ability who obtain a hearing, such as Mr. T. Brassey and Lord Rosebery, the major part have not cared to compete for the substantial rewards offered by the Universities as prizes of superexcellence; and the few members of both Houses who happen to have attained intellectual eminence in either seat of learning, when brought face to face with practical questions, seem infinitely less able to cope with difficulties or suggest satisfactory solutions than the comparatively illiterate traders, whose knowledge of the world and its problems has been culled not from books but from real life. It was not so in the days when Canning and Peel were seated on the back benches. Nor indeed later on, when Oxford sent to St. Stephen's Gladstone, Lowe, and Roundell Palmer, each champion adorned with her freshest laurels. But then these

gigantesque worthies were never hampered at the outset with two or three waspish examinations per annum for about ten years. They read hard. Not, however, in fetters and leading-strings. They read hard, just as your oarsman trains for the Putney contest. But they were not under orders to row a savage race once in every twenty-four hours for several weeks before the grand event came off. Such a strain upon the nerves would to a moral certainty have ruined their rowing, exhausted their energies, and insured ultimate defeat.

So far as the interests of learning are concerned, therefore, wallahism must be pronounced the stupidest of blunders, founded on the most imperfect acquaintance with human nature. The men who were guilty of instituting the system had before their eyes the *reductio ad absurdum* of the Cambridge Senior Wranglerships; but they heeded not the plain conclusion deducible from evident premises. A great University—for the *alma mater* of Newton, Byron, and Tennyson deserves the epithet—proposes annually a race for honours, wherein, after the true apostolic fashion, but one competitor shall receive the laurel-wreath. To the broad world it is solemnly promulgated that Tompkins of St. Algebra's College, by virtue of being Senior of the Wranglers, is the best man Cambridge can produce during the space of a given twelve months. No exhibition of the competitive principle could be more perfect. The trainers are as eager as the horses. The course runs level, and there is no handicapping. Emphatically the best wins; and the only remaining doubt is, as to whether the winner after all happens to be quite the prodigy his University would have mankind believe—as to whether, in fact, he ought to be rated as a man of supernacual merit at all.

The question can be only answered by a glance at the list of Senior Wranglers. When we find that these gentlemen as a rule do not set their mark upon mankind, but, on the contrary, relapse into extraordinary obscurity, we are surprised if not chagrined. Such, however, is the case. The men whom Cambridge delights to revere turn out nonentities, not celebrities. There are, it may be admitted, a few brilliant exceptions. We are speaking, however, of the average, and we repeat that with such an example of the fallacy of competition as a test of great merit, those well-meaning legislators, who sought to get rid of nepotism because once in a hundred times the square nephew got jammed into the round hole, ought to have paused before applying it with rude precipitancy to our entire Indian Empire. It is the fashion to imagine that public opinion in Hindostan is so totally non-existent, that the natives did not resent this crude method of bartering away the highest places in their land in exchange for the excessive industry of meritorious vulgarity. Those who thus reason, but imperfectly appreciate the subtle sensibility of the Asiatic mind. Never in the whole cycle of history was so outrageous an insult before offered by conquerors to the noble vanquished. The

option was in itself so disgustingly *shoppy* as to have been impossible kept in a nation of shopkeepers. To assert that this cruel wrong was not one of the causes which culminated in the Cawnpore massacre is to fly in the face of history. Never, until common sense and decency brings us back to a system of selection by special fitness to govern a great people, shall we purge ourselves of the wrong done to our fellow-subjects in the East.

To bring the subject even nearer home. Let us suppose that, owing to some entirely original mechanical contrivance hitherto not even dreamt of, our Navy becomes utterly useless for purposes of defence, and that a future Mantuffel or Von Roon overruns our light, hitherto unconquered, little island with hordes of Uhlans and lifemen. England, not possessing an army, would of course be at the mercy of her Teuton conquerors, who, we may assume, would proceed to treat us as they of old handled fair Alsace. A military governor would take up his abode at Windsor, and to reverse the emphatic dictum of Dr. Arne's patriotic strain, Britons would be slaves. These arrangements would cause untold pain to every man among us. To be dragooned by swaggering Pomeranians, whose very lingo would sound detestably crack-jaw, would in itself be almost intolerable. The climax of bitterness, however, would undoubtedly be reached were the following advertisement to appear in high Dutch in the German official gazette :

'CIVIL SERVICE OF ENGLAND.—The Chief Secretary of State for England desires to announce that a public competition will take place for writerships in the above service. Candidates, who must be of German parentage, must be prepared to undergo an examination in classics, mathematics, and history. No knowledge of the English language will be required at the primary examination,' &c. &c.

Mutato nomine de te fabula narratur. Here we have an exact representation *veluti in speculum* of our own conduct towards our sable fellow-subjects in Asia. We should not like our governors, judges, excisemen, and magistrates to be selected from the lowest riff-raff of the German middle-class. It would be the depth of degradation for a high-mettled English gentleman to be compelled to obey a creature like base-born and base-natured, who could not eat without an attempt to swallow his knife, or bestride a thoroughbred without the imminent risk of his worthless life. Yet we have not done to others as we would be done by. The Hindoo native gentleman presents a type differing from our own standard; yet if he fails in certain items of refinement, it may be that he excels our average in others. Anyhow his wits are sharp enough to take accurate stock of the style of stuff competition has produced; and he very rightly objects to imitate a self-sufficient sahib whose parents are engaged in the useful rather than honourable occupation of huckstering in some back slum. The mild Hindoo has not as yet had his mind educated up

to the proper progressive level by the perusal of *Self-Help*. He has not quite grasped the beautiful theory, that to grind and to grab; to pinch, screw, and chisel; to attain success anyhow; to force yourself out of your own sphere for which you are fitted into another wherein you must be at best an eminent bore—that all this stamps the truly great man. Hence he cannot recognise the transcendent qualities of the Wallah. On the contrary, he forms his own conclusions as to the man's caste; and they are by no means charitable. He perceives that Mr. Lingen's patent prodigy lacks the manners and accomplishments of a gentleman, and in consequence turns from him as he would from one leprous, in wrath and disgust. No doubt our Asiatic must be regarded as blinded by prejudice. The Germans perchance would assert a similar truism of us, were we to ask the poor favour of being ruled by 'Vons' instead of by a set of vulgarians whose fathers swept the Berlin chimneys.

There remains one other and not unimportant aspect of this Wallah question. The privates in her Majesty's army and the seamen in the navy have surely the right of demanding to be not only efficiently, but properly, officered. Those who are acquainted with the secrets of the services are fully cognisant of the bitter term of contempt 'soldier-officer' applied to those sham gentlemen who have been intruded into positions of command. The writer heard some years back an intelligent horse-artilleryman speak of his lieutenant as an escaped linendraper's apprentice, whilst in the same breath he lauded to the skies a wild young nobleman in the Guards as the sort of officer he would follow to the death. It should be remembered that the temper of man is not by nature attuned to obey the word of command. When, therefore, he who utters it happens to be in all respects, except book-learning, but little above the social status of those whom he assumes to rule, a something within the soldier's or sailor's breast kicks at the usurpation. Every engagement in which our troops have ever fought proves the oft-reiterated truth, that the British warrior shows to the best advantage when handled by gentlemen. He will follow his natural, but distrusts an artificial, leader. He knows accurately well that just as a red coat does not create a soldier or a blue jacket a true sailor, so epaulets cannot make an officer—at least of the sort he is disposed to respect and accord blind confidence. Hence, so long as his superiors are to be put over his head without his opinion being asked as to their fitness, he conceives that it is the privilege of every man who serves his country to be commanded by the right sort. Hence, too, the harsh unkindly view he takes of that ultra-meritorious animal the soldier-officer, whose presence on parade or quarter-deck he is weak enough to regard as an insult to himself and his brave companions in arms.

HUGH MELTON

A Story

BY KATHARINE KING, AUTHOR OF 'OUR DETACHMENT,' 'THE QUEEN OF THE REGIMENT,' ETC.

CHAPTER VIII. SOLACE IN DIFFICULTIES.

SULTAN and I did not let the grass grow under our feet on our way back to A——. It seemed that rapid motion relieved the tumult of angry feelings which raged within me, whilst my little Arab had, no doubt, his own motives for exertion in the thoughts of the comfortable stable and good feed that lay before him. So it chanced that when I arrived I found our fellows only just sitting down to dinner. They were late that day, most of them having been out on a grand pig-sticking expedition; I was in time to join them, and found myself obliged to defer all conversation with Hugh till a more convenient opportunity. During dinner I noticed that Solace looked both sulky and melancholy, which, to say the truth, was not usual with him, though when he was put out he certainly sometimes assumed that form.

'Well, Baby, what is wrong with you to-day?' I inquired. I may observe that Solace had gone by the endearing epithet of Baby ever since he had joined us, one of the greenest ensigns ever produced by the Green Isle. Solace looked blacker than ever, and muttered, 'Nothing that I know of;' but Langham from the other side called out, 'O, by the way, Cairnsford, you have not heard of Baby's troubles. I must tell you them, and I think you will agree with me in seeing the urgent necessity for procuring an ayah directly.'

Several others now laughed, and Solace began to look seriously angry; but James, always good-natured, smoothed down his rising ire by saying, 'Never mind, old fellow, you will have a laugh at him some day, and you must learn to bear this sort of chaff; for if you show you do not like it, they will take care to give you enough of it. Join in the laugh, and it will not hurt you.' The young fellow brightened a little at this, and glanced with a smile at Langham, as though to say, 'Tell away, and do your worst. I am ready.' Langham laughed too—he was not a bad sort of fellow, only he could not resist a joke, and a ridiculous story about any of his comrades afforded such fine scope for ornamental embellishment.

'Well,' he said, 'you all know—or, at least, Cairnsford does not know—that we went up yesterday evening to Cumerbund—Major Crookley's place. You know him—the husband of that hideous

woman (Hecate we generally call her) who thinks herself a beauty, and is coquette à faire peur. Her husband is jealous of her; and no wonder, as she is always fishing for new followers, though I do not think she is very successful; at which I am not surprised. How Crookley came to marry her is beyond my understanding.'

'O, do you not know?' cried Brabazon. 'I heard the whole story the other day from Soames of the 9th. It seems Crookley came here a very green young fellow, and this Miss Loudon—then of course many years younger, though, I believe, not one bit better looking—set her cap at him. She had plenty of money, but she was fearfully plain even then, and had, moreover, a way with her that made most fellows fight shy of her. Crookley was introduced to her, and, once she had got hold of him, she kept him, on some pretext or other, running after her, until one night, at a dance, where he was foolish enough to go without the protection of a superior officer—in which respect, happily for the regiment, Solace was more fortunate—he inadvertently made use of the somewhat highflown expression, "May I solicit the honour of your hand—" "for the next dance," he would have said; but she interrupted him quickly with "Dear Charlie, as you love me so well, and seem so truly to desire it, I am yours. Call on papa to-morrow, early in the morning. For the present, I must say good-night, as we are going." And she slipped off, leaving the unfortunate young fellow too dumbfounded to speak or to move. A comfortable night he must have passed, I should fancy; but at last he decided there was nothing for it but to call next day at her home and explain the mistake.

'Call he did, accordingly, and asked for Miss Loudon. He was shown into the drawing-room, where she presently came to him, apparently only just returned from riding, as she was in her hat and habit. She welcomed him with great *empressement*, but he, though feeling a little uneasy, rushed boldly at the matter in hand, and began,—"I fear, Miss Loudon, you must have misunderstood some words I made use of last night in requesting the honour of your hand for a dance. What I meant—"

"O, no—not at all," she interrupted. "I understood you perfectly, dear Charlie, and have given it to you fully and freely, as you see;" at the same time laying her hand on his. "Some one was saying to me just now that people might say I had misunderstood; but I answered that any one who dared say so to me I should, with my own hand, horsewhip within an inch of his life." And she gave the strong cutting whip she held in her hand a switch through the air, within an inch of his shoulders, as she spoke. "So you see, Charlie dear, there is not the least need to dread ill-natured remarks, and papa is ready to see you now. I told him all about it, and he will give me handsome settlements; we need not wait for your promotion, but can fix the day at once. I will go with you to

papa, as he is sometimes difficult to get on with for those who do not understand him."

'That is the way Crookley was hooked, according to Soames' account, and, to look at her, one would think it likely enough. I hear she keeps the identical riding-whip that conquered the major under a glass case in her own room. The fear of it is what keeps him, in general, in such awe of her, I should imagine. Now, go on, Langham, and tell us what happened to Solace.'

'Where was I?—you have put me out,' said Langham peevishly. He liked to have all the talking to himself, and felt aggrieved that Brabazon should have interrupted his story. 'O, I was telling you we went up to Cumberbund for croquet, with the prospect of a dance afterwards. I need not tell you that if Solace has a marked failing, it is a strong tendency towards a mild flirtation, enjoyed quietly, without too much excitement, over an ice or a jelly at a dance, or by the help of the language of flowers during a stroll in the country. That is his style. Rather too much in the milk-and-water line for me, as he always keeps half his mind on the watch for danger signals, and only goes into the business with the other half; but *chacun à son goût*, and it is certainly the wisest way after all.

'Well, yesterday he had not been long at croquet when his till then unoccupied fancy became attracted by Miss Loudon, a half-sister of Mrs. Crookley's, and without doubt a very pretty girl, only just come out from England to live with her sister. She and Mrs. Crookley are about the same height, and—I suppose through some caprice of Mrs. Crookley's—they were that day dressed alike; besides that they resembled each other in the colour of their hair and their tone of voice—both, in fact, speak curiously alike; so that unless you saw their faces, you could not by the voice distinguish one from the other. Miss Loudon is, however, as pretty as her sister is the reverse, and I could hardly wonder at Baby's unsophisticated mind being caught by so attractive an object. And then her get-up was sweetly pretty, and she wore the palest cream-coloured gloves, that fitted to perfection; she had an artless way of requiring the croquet-balls to be settled under the prettiest arched instep that any man ever had the pleasure of beholding. His weakness was excusable, after all. We can pardon it; but for the safety of the regiment, my dear friends, let us all beg him next time to look before he speaks.

'He, of course, joined in a game of croquet, playing on the same side as the young lady I have been describing. I thought I should get more fun out of the thing by strolling about, and now and then looking on; and so, I think, it turned out.

'Shortly after the game commenced, Major Crookley, of whose relationship to Miss Loudon Baby was ignorant, and was consequently fiercely jealous of their evident intimacy, had a run of wonderful good luck, and went flying about the ground, displacing every one, to the

triumph of his friends and anger of his foes, who whispered loudly, "Did you ever see such barefaced spooning?" "Such a fluke," &c. At length he approached Miss Loudon's ball, croquetted it, and with one powerful blow sent it flying far over the boundary of the croquet-ground.

"O, dear!" she cried plaintively, "that is me. How could you be so cruel! At any rate, you will bring it back to the edge of the ground."

"Is it yours? I did not know. You can bring it back yourself, or make Mr. Solace do it for you, if you do not want the trouble," he answered carelessly, going on with his game.

She turned to Solace, who was standing beside her, with an appealing gesture.

"You hear what he says. I do not want to go all that way. Would you go and get it for me? And do you think you could manage to put it down in good position without being observed? I am such a bad hand at croquet, I shall never get on unless I am helped."

"He ought to do it himself when he sends a lady's ball so far off the ground," answered Solace; "but I am glad he did not, for my own sake, as it gives me the opportunity of being useful to you."

With which touching speech he picked up the ball, and, with great adroitness, contrived to place it in excellent position, as he thought, unseen by any one. Major Crookley was, however, too devoted to his game, and too proud of his success, not to be very well aware of the exact spot where he had left each ball, and just as Solace had settled Miss Loudon's ball to her liking, Crookley called out,

"Why, what is that? I say, Solace, where are you putting that ball? It has no business there."

"O, yes; I assure you that is its place," Solace answered, trying to look unconcerned.

"And I assure you that is not its place, and I will not have it there," said the Major angrily. "I must request you to allow people to move their own balls on this ground, and not to infringe the rules of the place."

"I was not aware that bringing back a lady's ball when it had been sent over the boundary was an infringement of rules," replied Solace sulkily; "under the circumstances, I think you should have fetched it yourself, which would have obviated all this."

"O, you think so, do you? I wonder who asked your opinion," said Major Crookley insultingly. (He is always rather hasty, and his temper was now thoroughly up.) "I think ladies as well able to fetch their balls as gentlemen; and I shall make it a rule in future, on my ground, that they do so."

"Then I should think very few ladies will honour your ground with their presence," said Solace, whose "back was up," as the Yankees say.

"Might I ask what you mean by that speech?" asked the Major.

"I mean what I say," replied Solace.

"I suppose you wish to insinuate by it that I am no gentleman," continued Crookley, getting more and more excited as his opponent became more sulky and uncompromising.

"You may put what interpretation you like on it," answered Solace. "Anything will suit, I daresay."

"Come, come, this will not do," said Melton, just then stepping forward (he was there, too, for a wonder). "Solace, you should not have transgressed the rules of the ground; and you, Major, are, I am sure, putting an interpretation on his words Solace never would have given them. Do not let us spoil a pleasant party by such a foolish dispute. I want to join in the game, and I cannot get a mallet. Solace, give me yours, and take a stroll with Langham. He will show you all the beauties of the place, whilst the Major and I will see which is the best man at croquet."

'So the Baby, swelling with indignation, was turned over to me to bear-lead about the place; whilst Melton went in for croquet and flirtation with pretty Miss Loudon, whose blandishments, I fear, excited more response from our steady captain than they should have done, as I heard her tell her sister afterwards, Captain Melton was an angel, and he had the most perfect eyes she had ever looked at.'

'Come, Langham, draw it mild, if you please,' remonstrated Melton, laughing; 'your ears are too good, my dear fellow, and, in repeating what they hear, I fear you sometimes say more than your prayers. Besides, consider my feelings; I know I ought to blush, and am so hardened I cannot get one up, even to save my reputation before you all.'

'Is that all?' I said, as Langham proceeded to refresh himself with a draught of iced Moselle cup. 'I thought there was something more coming; but indeed that was foolish enough. Baby, my child, I hope you will be cautious, or the charming Amelia may have a chance of holding the horsewhip over your shoulders, as her sister did over Major Crookley's.'

'You are as bad as the rest, Cairnsford,' laughed Solace, with more good temper than he had at first shown. 'Why should not I admire a pretty girl, if I see one; and why should not I help her when she is in difficulties, if she asks me?'

'Why should he not, poor fellow?' chimed in Marshman. 'Of course he should if he likes; we only want to keep him from running his innocent little head into a very dangerous slip-noose, from which he will never be able to extricate it, if he once gets it in.'

'What are all you fellows making such a noise about? I have not half finished my story; and I declare one would think it was a ladies' committee-room, the noise and chatter is so great. Silence there, gentlemen, and let me continue,' cried Langham.

Order being restored immediately on this appeal, he went on, disregarding the plaintive looks of Solace, who would evidently have been just as well pleased had no farther disclosures been made of his yesterday's proceedings.

'After croquet,' continued the indefatigable Langham, 'it was proposed that we should dance, and I need not tell you Baby lost no time in obtaining the first dance from Miss Loudon. Not content with one, he asked for another, which was readily granted. As she gave it she said, "If I am not in the room when our dance begins, I shall be in the garden near the ruined temple; it is a favourite seat of mine; it is so pleasant to steal away between the dances, and rest in the cool evening air, among the ruins all covered with plants and flowers. Solace muttered something I did not hear quite, though I was close by at the time, about her being the fairest flower of all; but I suppose she heard it, as she smiled brightly, and went off with her partner. Now comes the dreadful part of the story, Cairnsford; I am sorry I have been so long coming to it, but it was necessary to explain everything.

'When the time drew near for his dance, Solace, not seeing the lady anywhere in the rooms, went to the garden to look for her. There she was, sitting in the appointed place; he could not see if she was pleased at his punctuality as he approached, as there was no moon that night, and the stars, though brilliant, did not light up the garden sufficiently for him to observe the expression of her face. She did not speak, and he began: "I knew I should find you here, when I saw you were not in the dancing-room. I have been counting the minutes till our turn should come round again."

"Do you really, then, like dancing with me so much?" she replied. "But it is only the nonsense people like you talk; you think, because you are here to-day and there to-morrow like a butterfly, you are privileged to show in your character all the inconstancy usually ascribed to that insect."

"Indeed you wrong me," Baby replied earnestly; "you do not know how I have looked forward to this dance. But even if you do not believe what I say, do me one favour. Give me one flower out of your bouquet, that I may keep in remembrance of this evening; you cannot refuse me this little request. Just that one rosebud; you will not I am sure be so cruel as to refuse it; there is no harm in it."

"No harm in it, indeed," said a man's voice behind them. "I like that. Sir, I say there is harm in it; and you will have to do without a flower from this lady, as I shall not allow her to give you one."

"And what business have you to interfere between me and any lady to whom I may make such a harmless request, I should like to know?" asked Solace haughtily.

"I will very soon show you what right I have to interfere," roared the Major, for it was none other than he, springing forward in an ungovernable passion, at the same time flinging away a cigar he had until that moment carried lighted in his hand, and aiming a blow at Solace's face with the white-kid glove he had just been about to put on, before returning to the dancing-room. Solace, seeing his intent, stepped back quickly, and escaped untouched; but the insult was too marked, and turning away, he said, "You shall hear from me again on this matter, Major Crookley; a friend of mine will come to you here immediately, as the affair had better be settled at once before it gets wind, when the authorities would interfere."

"Very well, sir," answered the Major, becoming calm enough when he perceived his insult had been taken up in the way he wished. "I shall wait here for half an hour for your friend; if he does not come before that time expires, I shall think even worse of you than I at present do."

'Almost beside himself with rage Solace walked off to me, and related what had occurred, begging me to act as his second, and to appoint a meeting at half-past four o'clock, in a secluded spot just outside the garden, on the banks of the river.

'I tried at first to reason our friend Baby out of this absurd idea, representing that duels were forbidden by the regulations of the service, and that it would cost him his commission; but you have no notion how stiff an infantile mind can be until you have been placed in a position like mine.

'Seeing I could not persuade him to listen to reason, I called Melton, who was equally unsuccessful, and who was at last obliged to say, "Well, Langham, if it must be, I should advise you to go and see Major Crookley; the half hour is nearly up, and it will not do to let him think any of our regiment were defaulters in an affair of honour. Stay, I will go with you, as really I think there must be some mistake; I do not think the Major can be such a fool as to object to his sister-in-law giving a flower to any one she chooses. Solace, you wait here till we return."

'We accordingly went to the garden, and in the appointed spot found Major Crookley. "Ah," he cried, on seeing us, "you have only just saved yourselves; the half hour is almost up, and if you had not come in time to settle this little business, I should have been obliged to punish your young friend some other way, instead of giving him the satisfaction of a gentleman, as I had intended."

"Well but, Major," said Melton, "will you tell us what it is all about? For Solace tells us it is about a flower he was begging from a lady; but that seems quite too foolish to believe. I am sure there must be some misunderstanding."

"Misunderstanding, indeed!" replied the Major excitedly; "it was a great deal too plain to me. I had come to sit out here

in the cool night air with my wife, who was tired of dancing; I left her for a moment to go and light a cigar at a lamp in the veranda; and when I returned, I found this fellow sitting beside her making love to her, and begging for flowers and keepsakes and what-not. I just told him my mind straight out; and I will not say I did not provoke him to challenge me, but then I was quite justified in doing so by the circumstances of the case; and I will give the young puppy a lesson that will teach him to meddle with other men's wives in future."

'As the Major mentioned that it was his wife from whom Solace had begged the flowers, Melton started, and laid his hand on my arm to prevent my speaking; when the account was finished, he said, "You certainly had great provocation, Major Crookley, and I regret that any officer of 'ours' should have given you such grave cause of complaint; but tell me—if it could be proved that Solace imagined he was addressing another lady, whilst he was in reality speaking to Mrs. Crookley—if, I say, it could be proved that he was thus mistaken, and had no intention of annoying you in any way, I suppose you would have no objection to apologise for your insulting act to him, in which case he would of course withdraw his challenge, and all might be settled amicably."

"Well, certainly," the Major answered, "if it could be proved that the young fellow had mistaken my wife for any other lady, which in this dim light is just possible, I suppose I ought to ask his pardon for my offensive gesture; yet I hardly think he could have made such a mistake."

"Well, I cannot be sure about it," replied Melton; "only my impression is, that he took your wife for another lady, for whom I know he entertains a great admiration. The best plan, however, will be for us to meet at the appointed place at half-past four o'clock, when, if an accommodation is possible, I will arrange it; if not, Mr. Langham and I will act as the friends of Solace; you, I suppose, will bring your own." So saying, we turned and walked back towards the dancing-room, but we had not gone half-a-dozen yards when Melton went into a fit of quiet laughter, so violent that we were obliged to stand still for a few minutes till he got over it a little. "O, it is too good, Langham! Is it not splendid? Think of that foolish Baby making pretty speeches to that old Hecate, Mrs. Crookley. And then his fighting a duel for love of her *beaux yeux*. Our fellows will die of laughing when they hear of it; I tell you what we ought to do. It will be a good thing to give that foolish youth a little fright; it may break him of the habit of indiscriminate flirtation he has allowed himself to contract, and it is sure to give us some fun, when he knows for whose sake he has been risking his precious person under the Major's fire; for he is A 1 with pistols. We will

not let him know about the mistake until they are on the ground face to face ; then imagine how he will look when he finds Mrs. Crookley is the fair cause of strife."

'I thought the idea good, and readily agreed to work it ; but we were near failing in the beginning from the dreadful difficulty we experienced in keeping grave faces, whilst we told the unhappy Baby the hour and place of meeting, with other arrangements, ending by requesting him not to allow people to see anything unusual about him, but to keep up dancing with his customary spirit till the guests separated, which they did about four o'clock. As soon as they were gone we seized on Solace, and dragged him off to the place of meeting.

"We can sit here and smoke a quiet cigar," observed Melton, "until the time is up. We have only half an hour to wait ; and in the mean time, old fellow, if you have any message to leave for any of your friends, tell me, for though I do not think matters will be as bad as that, still it is the correct thing to do, and we may as well do the proper thing as we are about it."

'Yes,' interrupted Solace at this juncture, 'and a most heartless fellow I thought you, Melton. You looked so cool and easy over it all, and asked me had I made my will in such a matter-of-fact manner, that I thought you the most unfeeling monster I had ever met, and longed to be able to proclaim to the regiment what an unnatural ruffian you really were, instead of the kind good-hearted fellow we had hitherto thought you.'

'That will do, Solace,' said Langham, waving his hand serenely ; 'your thoughts were very visible on your face, and I could repeat them all exactly as they passed through your mind, if I considered them worth repeating. I only wonder how I ever kept my countenance ; I am sure I have injured myself internally in my struggles to keep from laughing outright.'

'Time went on ; Solace was worked into a white heat by Melton's friendly offers and my instructions and comforting assurances, and I was beginning to think we should have to take the other line, and make light of it, to keep his nerves steady, though, to do him justice, they stood the test wonderfully when Major Crookley made his appearance.

"O, here you are already," he cried. "I am glad you are so punctual. We shall get over this little business in a few minutes ; and I do not want to be long, as Mrs. Crookley may take it into her head to ask where I have been. I have brought a surgeon as well as my second, you see. I thought it likely one would be wanted.'

"Very well," I answered. "We had better now measure the ground and place the principals. You are neither of you inclined to apologise, I suppose ?"

"No, indeed," said Solace stiffly ; while Major Crookley did not

seem to have heard my question, and began chatting to the surgeon with great volubility and ease of manner. Solace stood apart, looking as if he had swallowed a ramrod, and apparently taking not the smallest interest in our proceedings, though I am convinced he was watching out of the corner of his eye the whole time. The Major had brought a very nice pair of pistols, which we determined to use, as they were the only ones to be got, and in a few minutes everything was ready. The principals were placed in their proper positions, and Melton was just about to step up and ask Solace how he could be so fearfully foolish as to run himself into such a scrape for Mrs. Crookley, when a dark figure rushed out from among the bushes coming from the direction of the house, and discovered to our astonished eyes the lady herself.

"This is a pretty way to treat your guests!" she cried, turning on her husband. "What do you mean by it? Do you think I will allow such performances here? Go back to the house instantly, and do not let me hear of your trying anything of the kind again. Here, give me that pistol before you go; you must have got my keys to take these. Pretty doings, indeed."

"The Major looked from one to another of us, as though imploring protection and pity; then slowly and reluctantly handed the pistol over to his wife, who returned it to its case, and who, as he turned to leave, called out after him: "Stay a minute, and tell me what this is all about."

"I only wished to give that young fellow a lesson about interfering with other people's wives. He is the one who was begging flowers from you last evening," said the Major sulkily.

"O, is that all?" answered the lady benignly. "He did not mean any harm by it; it was only a little gallant speech that meant nothing."

"All this time Solace had been listening with open-mouthed wonder; now he whispered to Melton, "You do not mean to say they think I asked her for flowers?"

"Indeed they do," laughed Melton; "and I much fear you were guilty of it—unknowingly, I believe, but still guilty you were. Tell them who it was you went to meet at the temple, and perhaps the matter may be set right."

"Thus urged, Solace stepped forward. "Was it you, Mrs. Crookley, I met at the temple last night? I went there to find your sister, Miss Loudon, who told me she would probably be there when our dance came round; and I thought I was addressing her when I begged for flowers. I should never have ventured to make so presumptuous a request to you."

"You went to meet my sister," replied Mrs. Crookley. "I knew from what you said you were mistaking me for some one else, though I could not guess who I was taken for. We will call Amelia,

and see why she was not there as she promised, thus causing this stupid mistake. Ali!" she continued, raising her voice. A black servant came out from among the bushes, and approached her. "Go and call Missee London—I want her; or stay, we will return to the house, but tell her I want to see her."

"If the Mem Sahib will not be angry, Ali will tell where Missee London gone away to," answered the black, with a cunning look in his dark eyes. "Missee London she run off with Mister Spot, the young leetle Sahib come so often to see the Mem Sahib. Ali hear Missee London say they go off to be married."

"Ensign Spot, of the 101st Native Infantry!" screamed Mrs. Crookley. "The ungrateful girl! is that the way she treats me? She will have nothing to live on, as I know. He has not a penny; and she need not expect anything from me, as she has not married to please me. I always intended her to make a good match, and now she has gone and spoilt all my plans. The ungrateful hussy!"

Melton and I looked at each other, and went into internal convulsions of laughter; whilst the Major sidled up to Solace, who was looking very glum, and holding out his hand, said,

"Well, it was a mistake after all, and I am sorry for my part in it, and still more sorry that girl has gone and made a fool of herself. You will forgive my hastiness, will you not? I really thought you were using me badly, and my temper is unfortunately soon put up. I must go now, and see where that foolish couple have got to, as I should be sorry if Amelia got into trouble; but you will come in and take something before you go?"

"We declined this, however, and set off on our way back to A——; and if Solace does not know what it is to be chaffed by this time, I am much mistaken."

"Bravo, Baby!" I cried, when Langham had finished. "You got out of it splendidly, though I think that was more through good luck than good guidance. I hope your next flirtation will not have quite so exciting a termination."

"O, I never flirt, I assure you," answered Baby gravely; "and it's a great shame of all of you to be so eternally accusing me of it."

"No, indeed, you never do flirt, and you never will until the next time; but take care you do not do it once too often, and find yourself hooked some day, before you know where you are. Now, Melton, come up into my room, for I want to have a chat with you."

CHAPTER IX.

A MYSTERY.

WHEN I brought Melton up to my room, and explained to him the cause of my long absence and its results, his anger exceeded even what I had expected and been prepared for. There came

into his face such an evil look, that I could not help thinking how bad the best of us are at times. If Captain Cameron had come before him then, I could not have answered for the results; neither reason nor friendship could have restrained him, and I determined to keep him in his room, if possible, till the first burst of his fury should have expended itself. It was then that he told me the affair about the money, saying,

'With such a villain I will keep no faith. I consider myself fully absolved from my promise by what has just passed; now, Cairnsford, I must write at once to Mr. Meares, and tell him what I have heard. You are ready to corroborate my statements, are you not?'

'Stay,' I said, 'they will require proofs, and those we must get. He said St. Margaret's was burnt, and the books with it. I do not remember hearing anything about it, and I think it would be well for one of us to get leave at once, and start on the spot for Calcutta, to investigate. I believe he was saying what was not true to mislead his wife; at any rate we must try and get some proof besides our mere assertions, for though I think they would be sufficient to break off the match as far as the young lady is concerned, the parents might not see it in the same light. As I think Crusty is more obliging to me than to you, perhaps I had better apply for leave, and go on this errand. In the mean time, if you can dissemble, you must do so. Do not let Cameron think you know a word of this; let him imagine that I went away without telling you; if we manage well he may not start immediately for Calcutta, as I am sure he will do when he knows where I have gone, on purpose to try and destroy any record that may exist. I shall be able to find the proofs before he suspects we are on the scent.'

'How can I thank you, Cairnsford?' Melton replied. 'You are too good to me, taking all this trouble for one who can do so little for you in return. Do you know that I never thought till now that hearing of such dreadful villany could make my heart so light? It has given me hope, and I shall live now with more purpose than I have done for months past; if ever I have it in my power to revenge on that man his wickedness to her, I will do so, cost what it may, be it soon or late. To him who can wait vengeance will come.'

His tone was vindictive, and a sullen light shone in his eyes as he spoke that showed my friend was not the perfect self-controlled being I had imagined him. However, the time for action had come, and, only waiting to impress on him the necessity of dissimulating before Captain Cameron, I left to seek out the Colonel and apply for leave.

It was granted without difficulty. I do not know that I can assert that I was a favourite with the old fellow, but he had a most nineteenth-century veneration for riches, and would always bow

down and worship any golden calf that might be set up before him. Now Fortune had favoured me in this respect, so I never found any trouble in getting my requests granted by old Armstrong, and this occasion was no exception to the rule.

Having obtained leave, I set about preparations for an early start next morning; at three o'clock in the night or morning, or whatever you like to call it, I set out without having seen Cameron since our parting at Booderabad; I was not even aware whether he had yet returned. It was a horribly long and tiresome journey, and, though I made the best speed I could, took me nearly a week to accomplish. At such times how slowly life seems to move! I felt like one reading an interesting novel, who longs to skip the intermediate pages, and arrive at the end of the story. I had an intense curiosity to see how this romance, to which I had suddenly become a spectator, would terminate; I felt as if every little exertion on my part to discover proofs of Cameron's guilt was the turning over of a leaf in the life story open before me. But it was slow work waiting, even though working; it might take years before the dénouement came, and the question was, would my interest then survive; would it not probably have died out ages before; and though Hugh would still be my friend, would not his love and its success have ceased, from a too familiar acquaintance with all its details, to be a matter of interest to me? Very likely it would; in the mean time the journey was dull, and I had nothing else to think of; so I thought of that till I worked myself into a perfect fever of impatience, and longed to leap over two or three years of my life, and see how matters would stand then. Life is slow work unless one is actively busy; in those sultry summer days when we rested under the shade of the banyan trees, and I listlessly watched the Hindoos cooking their rice, I felt that, with an intolerable overpowering sense of helplessness to make it otherwise; I should no doubt have felt it even more, but for the myriads of flies of all sorts and species that nearly drove me distracted, and made anything like serious thought out of the question.

At last I reached Calcutta; but I hope no one expects me to render an account of how I passed my time during the week I spent there, resting from the fatigues of my past journey, and preparing for the one before me. As I had suspected, the story of the fire was a *canard*, artfully founded on fact to mislead his unsuspecting wife. The vestry had been partially burnt, but the books were safe; and I not only saw the registry of Captain Cameron's marriage, but got a copy of it for my own and Melton's satisfaction; for the rest, I was even more unwell than I had been up the country, and longed insanely for a whiff of the cool sea-breezes on my native sea-coast, and a glimpse of the green Atlantic breakers, as they surge in on the tall gray cliffs of my fatherland.

The week I had allowed myself was over at last, and I set out on my return, wondering lazily during those dull hot days of travel whether Hugh would be guided by my advice in this matter, or whether he would act in a headstrong heedless manner, that would damage him before the world, and give his crafty opponent some loophole through which to creep, and appear before all eyes as a blameless character, whom circumstances, as represented and stirred up by that maniac Melton, had been very much against. It was quite on the cards that this would be the end of the whole business. I was prepared to see myself appear in rather a ridiculous light; but if such things were to deter me, I should have thought of them at first, not now; and I could only hope Hugh might be more manageable and willing to listen to reason than when I left.

I did not see him, or indeed any one else about the place, when I returned, and of course concluded they were all out at their usual amusements, as it was rather late in the evening, the most favourite time for outing in our station. I went therefore at once to the Colonel's quarters to report myself, and found him in, looking, as I thought, very grave and busy.

In such a dry old stick as he was that did not much surprise me. but I wished I had come at another time; for though busy, I saw by the way he motioned me to sit down, and hustled his papers together, that he intended to have a chat.

'This is a very sad business, Cairnsford,' he began. 'Can you throw any light on it? I suppose not, as you were away; still you were his friend.'

'I have not the very faintest idea to what you are alluding,' I answered with some curiosity, for, to do him justice, our Colonel's manner was really sad.

'To be sure I did not care much for him,' he continued; 'but then such a mysterious disappearance. It is very shocking. They say, you know, he must have been devoured by a tiger.'

'But who is it, Colonel? You know I have only just come back. I have not heard a word about whatever the affair is to which you are alluding.'

'What! not heard of Melton's disappearance? How extraordinary! I thought that every one was talking of it.'

'So they may be here, but as I have just come off a long journey, and have seen no one, I know nothing about it. Might I ask you to tell me all?'

I said this quietly enough, though my heart was beating loudly with suppressed excitement at this extraordinary rumour; so disappointedly told, that I could only gather Melton had disappeared somehow, and some people thought a tiger must have carried him off; but I said to myself, as these facts were slowly realised in my bewildered brain, that I knew better, and that if Melton was really

gone, it was a tiger in human, not in brute, shape that had made away with him. If he did not turn up, and if diligent search could discover the slightest proof my suspicions were correct, I swore to myself a deep but silent oath, whilst leaning breathlessly across the Colonel's table, that I would have vengeance sudden and summary—vengeance for the young life blighted, for the true heart stilled, for the brave blood spilt, for the earnest friendship shattered. Yes, he should never escape me, this skulking ruffian, this midnight assassin; and I vowed a vow before God to deal by him in my hour of power as he had dealt by my friend in his.

The Colonel's voice disturbed me.

'You look ill, Cairnsford,' he said; 'I should not have told you so suddenly, only I thought you must already have heard the sad news. He was a dear friend of yours, I remember; no doubt well worth liking too, though he and I did not pull well together. Well, I am sorry for him; if we can find out the rascally brute that did for him, I will not be behindhand in firing a shot to avenge our old comrade.'

Old Crusty after all was better than I had thought him; he seemed really moved as he pronounced this quaint and characteristic funeral oration, and I cordially grasped the hand he held towards me. He then told me all the particulars of my poor friend's disappearance.

Just the fifth day after I left, Melton went out early in the morning to sketch, which was with him nothing extraordinary. He did not return at night, which was certainly not a little strange; but no one thought much about it till the end of the second day, when his prolonged absence induced Solace and Langham, with some of the others, to get up a party and go out in search of him. His sketch-block and other traps were found in a remote forest glade, but how he had left this spot could not be discovered. There were no footprints leading in any direction out of the glade, though the path by which he had entered was visible enough to the keen eyes engaged in the search. Hence some supposed a tiger must have carried him off, though others, combating that supposition, urged that a tiger would have left traces that might have been recognised as easily as those of a man.

It was now two weeks since his disappearance, and no farther light had been thrown upon the matter. I resolved, if my suspicions were correct, that the whole case should soon be cleared up.

On leaving the Colonel I immediately sought out Solace, who I knew to be a nice young fellow, and sincerely attached to Melton. It was some time before I found him, as he was at the racket-court with Langham, and I hunted in every other place before going there to look for him. They told me everything had been done to discover the truth about Melton's fate, and that after a fortnight's strict search

no more was known than when he was first missing. Of course, though satisfied that they had done their best, I could not rest without renewing the investigation myself, trusting that, guided by my suspicions, I should be able to find some clue that would enable me to expose the perpetrator of this dastardly murder; for that there had been a murder, and that Cameron had been implicated in it, I at this time never doubted.

Day by day I examined the glade where the last traces of my friend had been found, and searched the jungle for miles round in hopes of lighting upon signs that had been overlooked in former expeditions; but without avail. My health gave way under distress and anxiety of mind, and I was at length obliged to submit to the doctor's imperative orders, and return to England on sick leave; having obtained only this one certainty in the matter, that Cameron had for once been wronged by my suspicions, and that he was no more connected with poor Hugh's death than I was. Indeed, I had by this time begun to concur in the general belief that a tiger must have devoured him; the only thing that puzzled me in this supposition was the fact that we had been unable to find any traces of his garments, though we had certainly discovered a tiger's lair some three or four miles off in the jungle, and had avenged our comrade by slaying the inhabitant of it, generally supposed to have been poor Hugh's destroyer. Poor fellow, it was indeed a sad fate; both officers and men regretted him sorely, and remembered when too late what a kind helpful friend he had been, both to his equals and inferiors. As a mark of the respect and esteem in which he had been held, it was proposed to erect a tablet to his memory in the parish church of Marshampton, his native place, and I was commissioned to see that the order (a subscription had been got up for the tablet amongst the officers and men) was properly executed during my stay in England. Just before I left, some words that fell from Captain Cameron showed me that notwithstanding our meeting at Booderabad, that gentleman intended to prosecute his designs on Miss Meares; intending for that purpose to get leave, and return to England at the end of the year. I suppose he thought I had believed his assertions that the lady I had rescued was not his wife, and that my friend being now out of the way, I should not consider it worth my while to interfere. In that supposition he was mistaken; knowing what I did about him, it was imperative on me to let the girl's parents understand what kind of man their would-be son-in-law was. Accordingly home I went with a year's sick-leave, and as Cairns Hall where my mother and sisters resided was not far from Abbot's Park, one of the places held by Miss Meares during the time the terms of the will remained unsettled, I went over one morning to call on Mr. Meares, and to acquaint him with my discoveries.

He received me alone in the library, and seemed both distressed and shocked at the news I had to communicate; no doubt the thought of the comparative poverty they would be called upon to endure, after their brief taste of wealth and the pleasures it can purchase, was not agreeable; but he was a brave old man, and in a few minutes rose superior to any regrets he might have felt, and thanked me heartily for what he was pleased to term my very friendly conduct in letting him know the danger that menaced his daughter in connection with that man. 'And now,' he continued, rising, 'it is just luncheon time; let me persuade you to join the ladies, and take something before setting out on your walk home. It is warm to-day, though no doubt after the heat of India you do not feel it so.'

Thus Mr. Meares stopped me as I was about to leave, and bringing me into the dining-room, introduced me to his wife, whom I had never before seen, and his daughter, who recollected me perfectly, but somewhat to my astonishment made no inquiry after Hugh, as I thought, knowing our friendship, she might have done. Of course it was pleasanter to me not to have so painful a subject touched upon; but whilst admiring her beautiful features and clear deep eyes, I could not help mentally calling her a heartless flirt; wondering whether she would be annoyed that her marriage was broken off, and dislike me as the bearer of the bad tidings. Not that it would matter much to me; doubtless they would soon leave Abbot's Park, and then any neighbourly intercourse that my mother might have had with them would cease, unless they remained somewhere near. As I walked slowly home that day, I felt little pity for the downfall of the heiress, though some curiosity as to how she would bear it.

I had a conviction—whence derived I know not—that her proud beautiful head would never quail unworthily before any reverse of fortune.

For a day or two I heard nothing farther about them; then one morning, on my entering the breakfast-room, my mother looked up from a pile of letters before her, and said,

'I hear, Charlie, the Meareses are leaving Abbot's Park. Miss Meares has refused to marry that Captain Cameron, to whom she has been engaged for so long, and therefore, according to the terms of the will, all the money that was to have been hers in the event of the marriage goes to a number of different charities. I am sorry for them; they were nice people and pleasant neighbours. I think of writing and asking them here until they have settled their plans, and made up their minds what to do next. Have you any objection?'

Of course I said that I had not, and the two girls, Lilla and May, were in ecstasies of delight at the thought of having Miss Meares with them, hoping no doubt to make a bosom friend of her,

as the manner of some girls is. I did not want to disappoint them, so did not tell them my impression, which was, that Miss Meares would very likely receive all their confidences and sympathise to any amount, but would give none herself in return. Something about her face gave me the idea that, though she had a surface of frankness very taking to strangers, there was beneath it an intensely reserved nature that would never reveal its dearest thoughts and wishes but to one beloved object, and that to the one she loved there would be no reserve, no concealment; the passion of her life would be steady, absorbing, expanding, if rightly placed and worthily returned; intense, secret, and self-consuming, if unrequited or misplaced.

I said nothing, and my mother asked them. I hardly thought they would accept her invitation; but I was mistaken; they did: they agreed to remain with us for a few weeks, whilst looking for a small place somewhere near, suited to their now-limited means. The first night I fancied Miss Meares was cold and distant to me, though friendly enough to my mother and the girls. I thought she brooded over her loss of fortune, yet I felt almost angry with myself for imagining that the sad expression in her glorious eyes was brought there by any such sordid motive. Her singing was exquisite, and I felt that I could forgive any amount of coldness, if only I might be permitted to listen to that thrilling voice, and watch that noble passionate face unobserved. How is it that sometimes people perfectly soulless and uninteresting in themselves are gifted with such glorious talents? I almost hated her, as I watched and admired, when I thought that but for the glamour cast around him by that perfect face and angel's voice, poor Hugh might have been alive and happy yet.

We breakfasted late at Cairns; my mother and sisters were not early risers; but I often went out those bright spring mornings with my rod to a stream that ran through the place, and which from my earliest years I remembered as being a favourite resort of the speckled trout, so dear to the soul of the angler.

Next morning, after spending an hour or two fishing, I was wending my way home, when, as I approached a stile that I must cross to strike the nearest path to the house, I perceived a figure leaning against the fence with the back turned towards me. It was a woman, simply yet handsomely dressed in a pretty walking costume. After a few minutes' puzzled scrutiny I became aware that it was no other than Miss Meares.

She did not see me at first, and I watched her for a minute as she turned about with an anxious air, as though she had lost her way. I advanced towards her quietly, so that she did not hear me coming; and as I approached I had time to scan the delicate outlines of her face, and I imagined that she looked paler and more

thoughtful than usual. When I got near, a branch cracked under my foot; she started, and turned hastily, but without any signs of fear on her fair open brow. Recognising me, she held out her hand frankly, and exclaimed:

‘O Major Cairnsford’ (I had gained a step lately), ‘how very fortunate I have met you! I have lost my way, and am afraid I shall be late for breakfast.’

‘No fear of that, Miss Meares; we are in plenty of time; I can show you a short way back to the house.’ So saying, we walked on together.

We had not gone far, and while I was still thinking of some remark to make—for to tell the truth I both feared and mistrusted this young beauty, and felt silent and uncomfortable in her presence, she on her part being equally abstracted and thoughtful—when suddenly she exclaimed, without any preface or leading up to the subject, ‘By the bye, Major Cairnsford, I saw an account of the mysterious disappearance and supposed death of Captain Melton of your regiment, whilst you were at A——. Would you tell me all about it? I knew him years ago, and feel interested in his melancholy fate.’

She tried to utter the words in a matter-of-fact unmoved manner, but a glance at her half-averted face showed me that her eyelids trembled and her lips quivered as she spoke. Of course, painful as the subject was, I could not refuse to gratify her request, knowing that Hugh would have wished me to comply with anything she might desire; I felt that in making such a demand she evinced an interest, weak and tardy though it was, in the man who had loved her, and who would have given worlds to have heard even that expression of interest from her lips.

I told her all that I knew about my friend’s fate, not concealing my own early suspicions of Captain Cameron, who I said nourished, as I well knew, a very bitter dislike to his comrade Melton. She listened in silence till I had finished, and then exclaimed abruptly:

‘You were right, Major Cairnsford; Captain Cameron is in some way implicated in Captain Melton’s disappearance. I do not say he has killed him—in fact I hardly believe that he is dead—but that he has been made away with in some way, by Captain Cameron’s agency, I am convinced; it remains for us to find out what has really happened—whether he is still alive, or indeed dead—and whichever be the case, to punish the man who has worked this wickedness.’

She looked at me boldly now, with her head up, her cheek flushed, and her deep flashing eyes meeting mine frankly and bravely.

I shook my head, and answered,

‘You are mistaken, Miss Meares, and for once wrong Captain Cameron, whom Heaven knows it is not easy to wrong, for he is as

bad a man as the sun ever shone on ; but in this at least he is innocent. I thought as you do at first, and, guided by the light of my suspicions, I scrutinised his every act, in the endeavour to obtain a clue to my comrade's fate ; but I was forced at last, after many a long and weary search, to arrive at what I am convinced is the true conclusion, namely, that poor Hugh was devoured by a tiger, as my brother-officers at first supposed.'

'I wish I could think with you,' she answered in an unconvinced tone. 'That Captain Melton is dead must, I fear, be true; that Captain Cameron had no hand in his death I can hardly bring myself to believe. For a long time I struggled against my own convictions to believe Captain Cameron such a man as Captain Melton was—such a man in fact as I could have wished him to be; but now his baseness has been so fully revealed to me, and I remember so many little things that used to annoy me in him, which tend now to throw a clear light on his character, that nothing seems to me too bad to accuse him of. I cannot feel as if I could wrong him by any charge I brought against him.'

Thus as we walked homewards we fell into conversation on subjects all more or less connected with that first started. She told me of how they had first met Melton in Ireland ; of their poor dwelling and frugal mode of living, to which, however, they soon did not fear to invite him when they found how easily contented and kindly was his nature, just as much at home with them and as friendly in his intercourse with them as he was with the gay inhabitants of Moortown Castle, where he was also a favourite and a frequent guest. Then she spoke of his great talent, of the pleasant days when he taught her some of the secrets of his art, and praised her aptness as some more than usually happy touch evinced her progress and the success of his lessons. Her voice grew sweet and low, and her cheeks flushed brightly, as she spoke with real feeling (that truest of all eloquence) on this subject, evidently dear to her thoughts; as I watched her I regretted more and more that Hugh had not lived to meet her now, when she dared to own to herself and to show to the world that she loved him. We reached the house at last, and my prejudice against Miss Meares was completely dispelled as I left her at the porch, whilst I went to put away my fishing tackle. My morning had been tolerably successful ; I had six fine trout in my basket, the result of my three hours' stroll. It was not bad sport, and it had given me the opportunity of penetrating a little beneath our charming guest's proof-armour of reserve, and had enabled me to find out that a heart beat underneath, closely watched and guarded though that heart might be.

I liked her better after that walk, and as I followed her into the breakfast-room began to think that perhaps my friend had not been so wrong after all, when he committed the happiness of his life to

her keeping. The Meareses stopped with us for two or three weeks, whilst looking out for a small house in the neighbourhood; but at last, not finding anything of the sort was to be had, they determined to move to London, and in one of the suburbs of that busy city make themselves as comfortable as their very limited means would permit.

'And if we find we cannot make both ends meet any other way,' said Mand gently, 'I shall try to find some one weak enough to intrust me with the education of the rising generation. I have no doubt I shall make a very skilful governess; and something must be done, I am sure.'

I looked at her as she spoke, and saw from her heightened colour and sparkling eyes that she was determined to face the world boldly, and fight the battle of life bravely; but alas, poor girl, she little knew what was before her, and I could not think of the trials and humiliations that bright spirit would be called upon to endure without an inward thrill of pain. My mother tried hard to dissuade our visitors from this plan, and to make them remain longer with us, at least until some better expedient might be discovered; but they were impracticable, and I at length resolved to speak to Miss Meares myself about it, and try to bring her over to our side, when I felt sure her parents' objections would soon vanish. We had become great friends by this time: she would let me now and then get a glimpse of her kindly, honest, upright heart, and would not scruple to propound her queer unworldly theories to me about any subject on which we might be talking; she met me always as a man might meet a friend, with full frank look and glad smiling welcome; and I—alas, I had begun to think there was nothing better in the world to live for than the soft friendly glance of those deep-violet eyes, the gentle welcoming smile on that lovely face, the touch of her soft white hand at morning and evening. I never wondered now at my friend's infatuation; I only wondered how, guessing, or knowing rather, that her heart was with him, he had not taken her by force of the stronger will, and held her against the world. It was what I would do, I told myself, if only I could be sure she felt for me as she had once felt for him; but that affection for my lost friend was the barrier between us, as it was also the connecting link. I knew well I should never have occupied the position I now did in her regard, had I not been Hugh's friend; and our longest and most intimate conversations were always on some act of his life, or some trait of his noble and unforgotten character.

Was it not possible, I asked myself, that this pearl above all price, that I so ardently desired, could be won again? If her love had been but a girlish fancy, perhaps it might; but if the whole of her true woman's heart had been given to Hugh, I feared I had no hope. There are some women who love but once, whose

first girlish fancy is also the love of their womanhood ; I feared, yet gloried to believe, that my peerless Maud was one of these. I could not bear she should leave us, though I dared tell her nothing of this, and met her always with as good an imitation of her own fearless friendship as I could assume. But she must not go away into those squalid London lodgings ; on that point I was determined. Rather than that should happen, I would conquer my fears, pour all my passionate prayers and longings into her pitying ears, and if it were possible, nay if it were impossible, win from her a promise that one day at least I should have a right to protect and shelter her from the hardships and cares of the strange world into which she was about to enter.

CHAPTER X.

AND THUS IT CAME TO PASS.

I REMEMBER well the lovely morning late in June when I opened my heart before her who so entirely possessed it ; not, as I had intended, with deliberate purpose, armed and prepared at all points, with prayers and entreaties against the denials I dreaded, but in broken, disjointed, vague words, that yet made themselves better felt and understood than those I had so often thought over would probably have done. She was to leave the next day but one, yet I had not spoken, and though intending to speak, could not summon up courage to do so. But accident brought about at last the opportunity for which I waited, and the words that could not be controlled broke from my heart before I knew they were uttered.

She was out somewhere about the place that morning quite alone ; the girls and my mother were all in different parts of the house, and I wandered out to seek her in whose presence my heart delighted. It was a glorious morning ; I remember yet the brilliant summer sunlight making golden gleams on the shaded grass under the old lime-trees, the sweet scent of hay that floated by upon the breeze, the lazy hum of flies that fell upon the ear as they floated in ceaseless swarms through the scented lime blossoms ; everything seemed in a state of blissful repose, such as the lotus-eaters enjoyed on that dreamy shore where it was 'always afternoon.' She was not in the garden ; I looked in vain in every nook for a glimpse of the white dress I knew so well ; I would have called, but I dared not utter aloud that dear name ; I searched and waited. I turned at last down towards our little river, that ran flashing and glancing in sunlight and shade through many a mile of the old domain. It was deep too, though but a small river, and the current in parts dangerously strong ; just below the garden it narrowed in between high rocky banks, that rose perpendicularly to the height of about thirty feet above the water. The whole stream just there was, at

the narrowest part, about fourteen feet across ; but the water looked black and dark, and the rocky walls on either side fearfully sharp and jagged.

As I sauntered down to the river just there I hardly expected to see Maud at that spot, but I thought it very probable I should find her farther on, under some old chestnut-trees that spread their dark foliage far out over the water. I knew the smooth rocks under their drooping branches were her favourite seat. I found her sooner than I had expected ; as I approached the stream, which, though it here ran deep and dark, made only the faintest bubbling noise, the sound of voices struck on my ear, and, gaining the bank, I perceived her on the other side of the river in conversation with a lady, whose back was turned towards me, but whose figure seemed somehow strangely familiar to my eyes.

She was talking rapidly in a wild impassioned manner, Maud listening with a half-frightened, half-pitying look in her sweet face, and now and then, I could see, trying to soothe and comfort her excited visitor. They neither of them saw me, and for a minute or two I watched them unobserved ; then the unknown, suddenly turning, revealed to my astonished eyes the beautiful features of Mrs. Cameron, now distorted by jealousy and pain, whilst her fine eyes seemed to gleam with an unnatural light. Though watching them, I could not overhear their conversation ; nor did I care to do so, for, although surprised at seeing Mrs. Cameron, I thought she could tell Maud nothing she did not already know, or that would render my interference necessary. What passed between them Maud related to me afterwards ; and as I think it will tend to make my narrative clearer, I relate it at the time it occurred, as if I had myself been present. Maud had gone out alone that morning, as I said, and was wending her way towards her favourite seat, which was on that side of the river farthest from the house, and, be it remembered, on the opposite bank to that on which I stood watching them. She had crossed a little rustic bridge a few hundred yards from where she now stood, and had arrived at the Robber's Leap, as the narrow part of the river I have described was called—from some old family tradition, I believe—when a lady, very handsomely attired, though her dress bore evident marks of wear and travel on it, stepped out from among the trees, and advancing towards her, said,

‘Am I right in supposing I am addressing Miss Meares ?’

‘I am Miss Meares, certainly,’ replied Maud, rather taken by surprise. ‘But you have the advantage over me, as I cannot remember ever having met you before.’

‘Neither have you,’ answered the stranger. ‘I come from a far land, lady, to beg you to do me a favour, and to save yourself from a life of shame and trouble.’

Maud tossed her head with her old proud impatient grace.

'I do not understand you,' she said. 'Trouble we must all have in this life—God sends it for our good, if we look at it rightly, if not for our punishment—but only sin brings shame; and, through God's grace helping me, the stain of disgrace shall never rest on my name through any act of mine.'

'O lady, beautiful, cold, proud English lady,' cried this strange visitor, and Maud fancied her voice and accent had a foreign unfamiliar sound, 'have you ever loved? Do you know what it is to have one man enthroned in your heart—his love the sole earthly good you covet, his smile dearer to you than the summer sunlight, the lingering tones of his voice pleasanter to your ear than the most enchanting music? Do you know what it is to dream of him by night and watch for his step by day—to feel, the morning his presence is not with you, blacker and lonelier than the gloom of the wild monsoon? Have you loved like this, lady, and then felt that another eye, brighter perhaps than yours, a smile more sparkling and mirthful, was drawing the heart you loved, the one treasure you craved for, from you? Do you know what it is to suffer thus?'

'Poor thing,' Maud answered tenderly, 'it is indeed a fearful fate that you describe. The man who could treat you thus is not worthy of you. Give your love only to the noble and true; and it will never be thrown back as a worthless gift into your bosom. A true heart knows always the value of a true love, and even when it cannot return it sees the worth of the prize and is grateful. If you, poor soul, have been deceived by the tinsel glitter of a mock affection, your fate is indeed sad; but what can I do to help you? For empty pity is worthless, and you must have desired something from me if you came so far to see me.'

'But you love him,' the woman cried angrily, 'and he is not noble and true, as you fancy. It is he who has loved me, who now desires to marry you; he is deceiving you, for I am his wife—his lawful wife, do you hear? He destroyed my certificate, or I would show it to you. O lady, dear lady, for your sake, for mine, have nothing to say to him!'

Maud guessed now who her visitor was, and to whom she alluded, and saw that the poor creature was almost, if not quite, crazed, and she answered gently,

'I know you are his wife, if you refer to Captain Cameron; and I promise you solemnly on my word as a lady to have nothing more to do with him. But will you not tell me how you came here? I thought you were in India.'

'I could not rest in India,' she replied. 'I knew that he intended coming to England early in the year to marry you—he told me—so I thought I would seek you out, and if you were kind and wise and good, as they say English girls are, I would tell you my story, and get you to take pity on me. I sold all I had to sell, and

raised money in different ways till I got enough to pay for my passage over. He had got tired of coming to see me—he said I bored him—so I had heard nothing from or of him for a long time, and left without his knowledge. And now I have gained my point, you have heard my story and pitied me; but what am I the better for it? He will never love me again, and it would be better I was sleeping quietly beneath that dark water. And so I will!’ Here she made a step forward; then she paused suddenly. ‘If I do, your promise will not hold, and he will marry you. No, you must go too; then we shall rest together, and I shall be happy. Come, lady, come! It looks dark and cold; but none can disturb us there, and our sleep will be sweet.’

She seized Maud's hand as she spoke, and drew her towards the edge. For one instant her natural impulse was to struggle, and she tried to wrest herself away; but the dangerous fire began to glitter in the maniac's eyes, and she felt that her strength was no match for the frenzied force of the madwoman.

‘Wait a minute,’ she said calmly, while every pulse beat wildly. ‘I cannot go into the water with my boots on; I dislike the feeling of wet leather so much. You must allow me to sit down and unlace them first; and I should advise you to do the same, that then we may go alike.’

She had not seen me on the other side as she made this excuse to gain time; it was only with the faint hope the maniac might accede to her request, and help might arrive before she had finished, that she suggested it.

The madwoman happily appeared to approve the proposal, for she sat down also and prepared to remove her boots.

In the mean time, I, on the opposite side, had been alarmed by the strangeness of their actions, and had at last partly guessed the woman's intention. Their last act puzzled me; still there was no time to be lost. The bridge was some way off; was it possible to leap the river? In that part it was but fourteen feet or so. At its narrowest a good leaper could do it easily, and in my young days I had been accounted one of the best; besides, tradition told me it had been done before. At any rate the case was one of life and death; I must try. The place at which the leap was most practicable was about a hundred yards from where the two ladies were. Mrs. Cameron had already risen to her feet, and was holding out her hand to Maud, who lingered over the unlacing of her dainty balmorals. I took this in at a glance, as I went back a few yards for a run. As I came down to the leap, Mrs. Cameron perceived me, and cried wildly,

‘He shall not save you! Come! You shall not live to be happy with Edward when I am gone!’ Seizing Maud—who, seeing me, remained seated, and clung with the strength of despair to the herbage around—she dragged her towards the edge.

There was not much time to spare. As I cleared the river and landed safely on their side, Maud was but three yards from the overhanging cliff; but she had caught hold of a small sapling with one hand, and held for her life. At my best speed I ran towards them. Never even in my school-days had I got over the ground so fast; but Maud's strength had failed her, and she was already on the edge. One spring more, and I grasped her dress as the maniac, pulling her fiercely forward, sprang off the bank into the chasm below. Maud was carried over the edge by that last wild effort, but the dress held firm for an instant, though it seemed to give in every direction; the next minute I had my arm round her, and drew her on to the bank, scarcely looking in my agony at the rings of light floating wide over the water on the spot where the wretched madwoman had sunk.

As soon as I had placed Maud in safety, I returned again to the water. A little way down the river I saw for an instant the poor woman's light dress floating, but before I could get to the spot it had sunk again. Hastily I threw off my coat and plunged in, but had scarcely done so when she rose a little way farther down. I followed, but again she sank out of my sight; though I dived again and again, and spent a long time in search of the body, it was in vain, and I was at last compelled to desist until I could send men with drags to continue the search. I then returned to where I had left Maud, and found her quite unconscious. She had borne up bravely while the danger lasted, but the sudden revulsion of feeling on finding herself safe had overpowered her. I carried her to the house, and leaving her in charge of my mother, hurried back with the necessary men and implements to continue the search. After many hours' fruitless anxiety and toil darkness forced us to leave off; and though we continued for several days seeking the body it was never found. We supposed the current had carried it down to the Severn, and that in the depths of that river it had been lost beyond all hope of recovery.

This was the fate of the lovely and unfortunate woman who had been so foolishly trustful as to repose confidence in the faith and love of such a man as Captain Cameron. I, who had seen her in her beauty and confiding affection, felt deep pity for her sad end, and it only added one more motive to the many that actuated me in my hatred to Captain Cameron.

When I returned to the house that evening, Maud was alone in the library. On seeing me she came frankly towards me, saying,

'Major Cairnsford, I can never thank you as I ought for having saved me from that unhappy woman. I owe you my life, and I hope you may not find me ungrateful. How can I show you my gratitude—words are so feeble?'

'If you really feel that I have done you a service, you can do me



Arthur Lumley, del.

W. A. Woodcut.

"I WILL NOT MARRY YOU."

a great favour by staying longer with us,' I answered, feeling as I took her hand and gazed down on her sweet earnest face that the moment was at last come, and that I should never have a better opportunity of pleading my cause than at that minute. 3370*

'If you really wish it,' she replied, 'I will ask mamma to stay; but I am afraid you will have more than enough of us. We have already been here so long, you will repent ever having asked us to the house.'

She said this gaily, and turned laughing to her work that she had laid on the sofa; but I caught her hands and drew her towards me, saying,

'But I want you to live here always as the mistress!' then, seeing her face flush as she tried to draw herself away, I continued, 'O Maud, have you not seen that I love you? You will not refuse me, I have waited so patiently; but now I must speak. I have been too near losing you to-day to restrain myself any longer.'

'Major Cairnsford,' she replied, 'I am so very, very sorry. I cannot, indeed I cannot, do this for you, though I feel I owe my life to you;' then she continued with a burst of passionate feeling, 'Can you not feel, can you not understand, why I will not marry you? Esteem and honour you as a true friend I do, and ever shall do, but love you I cannot, and you ought not, must not ask it of me.'

'Alas,' I answered, 'I feel only too keenly that love such as I give you is not yours now to bestow on me; but they say love begets love, and mine is so true, so faithful, that I know some day I shall have yours in return. With that hope I will be content if you will give yourself to me, trusting one who knows the state of your heart, yet longs only for you. I shall have no fear of the result. You shall never, while I live, repent the day when you yielded to my entreaties.'

'Impossible,' she said again, trying to release herself; 'I cannot marry without love, and that is dead in me for ever. Leave me, I entreat you, Major Cairnsford; you cannot think how it grieves me to deny you anything; but this cannot be.'

But I was half mad with despair, and held her hands as she tried to withdraw them.

'I will not give you up!' I cried. 'I have lived a solitary life from my youth, and now when the cup of happiness seemed about to be presented to me, is it to be dashed from my lips? Is there no way in which I can move you—nothing that can induce you to alter your determination?'

'Nothing, Major Cairnsford,' she answered, rather laughingly; 'and I must insist on your leaving me. You are not acting like yourself, and are annoying and paining me more than I ever thought you would do.'

'Then go,' I cried, releasing her hand, and stepping from her. 'Go, since you are so cold-hearted that all my passionate prayers and pleadings cannot persuade you to reward the man whom you yourself assert has saved your life.'

It was a mean speech, and I felt it to be so at the time; but despair forced it from me, in the vague hope that it might induce her to reconsider her resolution. She stopped, looked at me fixedly for a minute, and then answered:

'If you claim my life as due to you because saved by you, I give it, having no right to withhold it; only I did not know you sought it on those terms.'

At that moment she despised me. I heard it in her tone; but I was like a shipwrecked mariner perishing from thirst, who drinks of the salt water rolling around him, and dies mad from the fatal draught. I leaned breathlessly forward.

'That way, or any way,' I cried, 'I have your promise! You will love me in time, my own one, if devotion like mine can gain affection, as people say it can.'

She shrank a little from me, as I drew her towards me, and said faintly,

'Only give me a little time. It is so sudden, and I was unprepared. You will give me a year, will you not? Surely you will not ask me to marry you for a year?' She drew back a little from me as she said this, and pressed her trembling hand to her forehead, saying, as if to herself, 'His friend! Have you forgotten so soon? I can never forget.'

There was intense pain in her tone, reproach to me, who dared utter words of love to her; reproach to herself, if she had in any way, by word or deed, encouraged my infatuation. But I was blind and mad, and cried bitterly:

'O love, let the dead bury their dead! We are young and strong, and have years of life before us. Shall we pass them in lonely misery because death has carried off the best and noblest? My love is as true and earnest as his was, though I can never be loved as he; yet what I desire, what I pray for, is not the love he won, and might, had he lived, have won so proudly. No; I crave only what remains, the last faint embers of a fire too sacred to burn afresh on another shrine. The year you ask I should be heartless indeed to refuse; till then I will wait in patient hope, having faith that my love will win yours at last.'

And so it was settled. I knew by the tone of her voice that she hoped long ere the year had passed I would have forgotten her; but I felt that, even had my love been less deep than it was, such a woman, once known, could never be forgotten. She was so different from the girls one meets generally in society—so gay yet so tender, so fearless yet so gentle, so careless of herself, so true to

others. I said nothing of this to her, but urged her to remain with her parents at Cairns till I should again see her; for I had made up my mind at once to return for that weary year to my regiment in India, to try amongst its wildest scenery to pass away the time that appeared endless to my longing heart.

But here also my persuasions were of little avail. One promise only could I exact from Maud; it was that she and her parents should remain a month longer with my mother and sisters before launching themselves upon the dismal ocean of London.

A day or two after this I left home again, with a sad heart, but a bright hope before me. After all, what was a year? But a short time indeed to those who hope—an eternity to those for whom hope is dead, or in whom fear reigns in its stead. And I had no fear. I knew that, next to the dead, I possessed my darling's esteem, and that none could displace me. What cause had I, then, to be sad, I asked myself, as we bounded merrily over the sparkling wavelets of the summer sea. I was a lucky fellow, after all. Only for this year, this hateful year! But I would go up to the hills, and while it away as best I might, hunting big game there, whose skins would furnish trophies I might proudly lay at my bright love's feet on my return. So I built castles in the air, watching the curling smoke of my cigar through those golden days, whilst we sped onwards towards Alexandria.

LA GLOIRE DE L'ÉGLISE

I.

I FOUND a wild brier down in the glen,
I found it to its woe ;
So lissom and tall it flourish'd then,
With its blossoms of rosy snow.
No thought of any kind had I
To work it or good or ill,
But it caught at me as I pass'd it by,
As a wanton wild thing will.
And from that hour for many a day—
'Twas a pleasure I now condemn—
I went to gaze on its blossom's play
And the curves of its slender stem.
'Twas a pleasure I now condemn ; it work'd
At last to a fix'd design—
To steal my pet from the glen where she lurk'd,
And make her entirely mine.
And this I could do, for hard by the glen
Was a garden vast and fair,
And one small nook of that wide demesne
I was bidden to tend with care.
Ah, then I was young and eager and brave,
I knew not the cruel world ;
I only thought of the blossom's wave
And the stem so rarely curl'd.
I carried my pet to my garden nook,
And I work'd with such loving care,
That her delicate petals I barely shook,
And the dew still trembled there.
Then who so happy as I, each day
To tend her and watch her grow—
To gaze my fill on my darling spray,
With its blossoms of rosy snow ?

II.

I knew not the cruel world, I said ;
But a single month went by
Ere three stout knaves by the devil were led
In my garden nook to spy.

'O, ho!' quoth one, with a sneering laugh,
 'What doth this wildling here?'
And he lightly touch'd my brier with his staff,
 But she shiver'd with pain and fear.
Quoth the second, 'All flaunting weeds I hate ;'
 And his hand with the billhook rose—
'Nay,' quoth the third ; 'but wait, man, wait :
 We'll make it a standard rose.'
They seized her, despite my prayers and woe ;
 They lopp'd off her graceful head,
And all her blossoms of rosy snow
 They scatter'd along the bed.
They bound her fast to a rigid stake
 That she neither could bend nor play ;
If she tried to sprout for dear life's sake,
 They shore the young leaves away.
They clipp'd and trimm'd to their hearts' desire,
 They gave themselves little ease,
Till they grafted a bud on my own wild brier,
 And labell'd her 'Gloire de l'Eglise.'
Through the long drear months I mourn'd for her sake,
 For the thought I never could check,
That she show'd like a martyr bound to the stake,
 With her sentence round her neck.

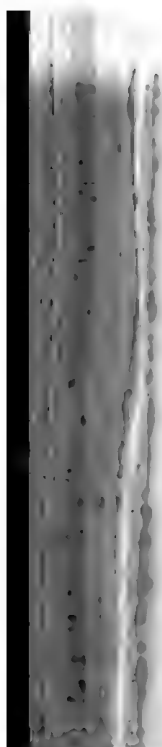
III.

But when the summer was halfway spent
 She put forth a single bud ;
'Twas perfect in shape and perfect in scent,
 And the crimson hue of blood.
The whole of her fresh young life she gave
 To nourish that bantling proud ;
And the three stout knaves they came to rave
 And crow their triumph aloud.
All folk made cause, so glad were they
 To shield the wonder from ill,
Till the lord of the garden pass'd that way,
 And he stood and gazed his fill.
He raised his hand ; he shook his head ;
 He placed the bud in his breast :
'She has done her penance,' he softly said,
 'And now she shall have rest.'
That night my brier began to droop ;
 Within three days she was dead ;
She could not faint, nor fall, nor stoop,
 For the stake held up her head.

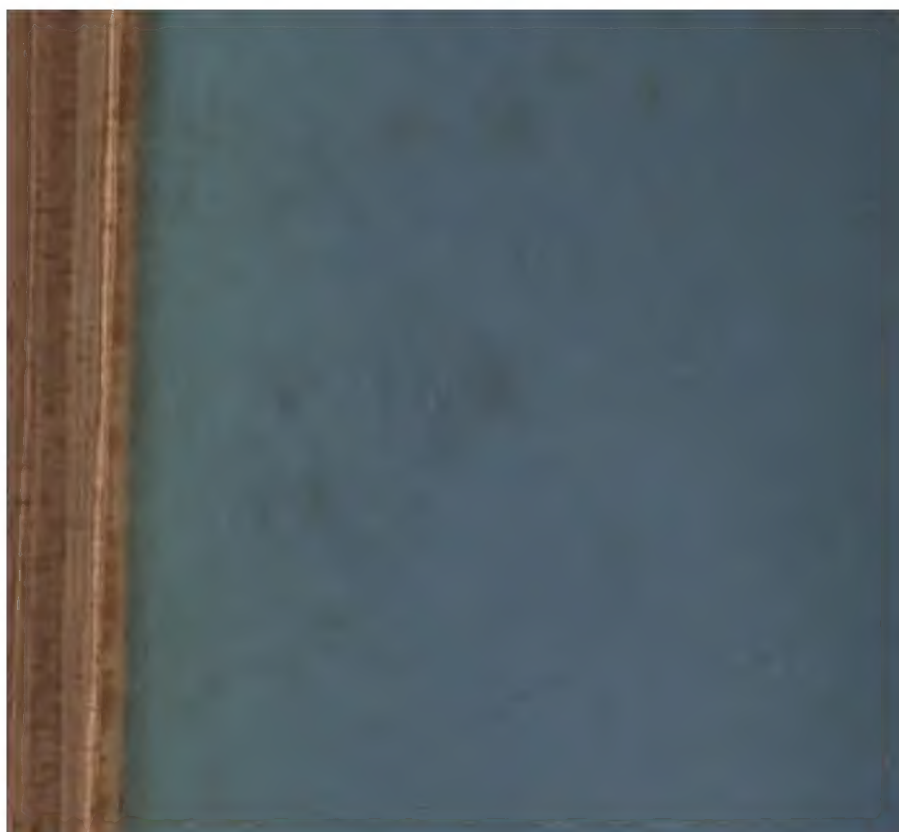
LA GLOIRE DE L'EGLISE

But the three stout knaves they found her out,
For her tender shoots grew sere,
And they marvell'd much how it came about,
And their groans were sad to hear.
They prated of worm and canker and blight,
Their lord they dared not blame;
But their sorrow for her was short and light,
For they vow'd she was saved from shame.
'Twas worth, for a brier to bear that bud,
A lifetime of wanton ease;
No rosy snow, but rich heart's blood—
A genuine "Gloire de l'Eglise."
I cannot tell—it may have been so—
But I curse them for their part;
When they took her from me she was happy, I know,
And she died of a broken heart.
But one there is more curst than they,
More curst than all other men,
Who, not content with watching her play,
Would carry her off from the glen.

HENRY POTTINGER.







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